

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 66 No. 48

January 1, 2012

What Holds for India?

Kuldip Nayar

Sufi Islam Versus Wahabi Islam

Asghar Ali Engineer

In search of the real self

Zahur Zaidi

Manu, Macaulay and Manmohan

G. Haragopal

Why Socialist Party ?

Pannalal Surana

Lokpal Debate

Rajindar Sachar

NAPMovements

Kuldip Nayar

Editor :

G. G. Parikh

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

India is always a story of shadows and sunshine. Which of the two prevails at a particular time gives it bad or good name. The passing year, 2011, is no different except that the shadows have lengthened. Corruption darkened the atmosphere throughout the year and what it exposed was that the system was reeking with graft. Non-governance tormented the nation further. In 2011, many skeletons tumbled out of the government's closet, one after the other. Early in the year, Commonwealth Games were a splendid success but it got sullied by bogus contracts, exaggerated charges and poor workmanship. When the chief organizer, Suresh Kalmadi, and his aides were arrested, the nation felt humiliated. Even though India won the world cup in cricket, the stigma of Commonwealth Games scandal did not go.

Still worse skeleton that tumbled out of government's closet was the 2G spectrum relating to mobiles - a sum of Rs. 40,000 crores had been denied to the state exchequer, the mother of all scandals. Telecommunication Minister A.Raja was arrested. Another minister, M. Maran, also from Tamil Nadu, representing the ruling Congress ally, the DMK, resigned from government. It was a

triumph of media and public pressure.

However, one positive development was the emergence of the Gandhian Anna Hazare who demanded the establishment of Ombudsman (Lokpal) machinery to deal with corruption. Hazare was in reality the face of civil society's resentment against government. Thousands came on the streets to demand the Lokpal. So heavy was the public pressure and Hazare's threat to go on fast that parliament had to extend its winter session for the relevant bill.

A new kind of India began taking shape. People felt that their voice counted if they would only raise it. It was heartening to see all political parties except the ruling Congress, collecting on the same platform. Unfortunately, the government was busy in locking the stables after the bullocks had run away and did little to regain the credibility. Non-governance told upon the economy. Prices began to rise, the inflation touching a double figure. Still worse was the fall in the industrial production and only 5.4 per cent growth against last year's 10.6 per cent. Investors, both foreign and Indian, held back their hand and the rupee against the US dollar fell by 18 per cent. Optimism of the

past, particularly the people's self-confidence, sagged and they were stung with the fear of further slide down.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the messiah of economic reforms, brought before parliament the proposal of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in retail to attract reportedly 100 million dollars and the Pensions bill to utilize the accumulated money for development. The fear of big giants like the Walmart crowding out small shopkeepers and snapping direct ties between farmers and local mandis made all political parties including the allies of the Congress to close their ranks. It was yet another blow to the Prime Minister whose graph of popularity came down by a few notches more. People's confidence in him is shaken because they do not see him raising the growth rate to 9 per cent as he had done earlier. Now it is hovering around 7 per cent, the minimum to avoid the lay offs and dire unemployment. The ruling Congress has retrieved a bit of reputation because BJP has supported it on the pension bill but putting a limit of 26 per cent on FDI.

The last days of the year has seen measures to give security of food to the poor, nearly 65 per cent of the population. Congress President Sonia Gandhi, who does the back seat driving has pushed the unwilling prime minister to own the measure. However, the project will put a burden of Rs. 95,000 crore on the over-stretched exchequer. But it may win the Congress votes in the forthcoming elections in five states, including UP, Punjab and Uttarakhand.

The prime minister's belated firmness is visible from the announcement that Kundan Kalam 1000 MW nuclear power plant

will open in Tamil Nadu despite its Chief Minister Jayalalitha's opposition. The same determination is reflected in his announcement that FDI in retail would be introduced in March. The pro-reform lobby has not yet given up the hope and some billionaires in America are closely watching whether he would open the nuclear plant and whether he brings round his political opponents to accept FDI in retail.

The sunny side of Manmohan Singh's government is that it has improved its relations with the neighbouring countries. It has signed pact with Afghanistan to have a 'strategic' relationship. Bangladesh

is happy over his visit to Dhaka, even though it is yet to get its share from the Teesta River. Islamabad looks forward to having free trade with India now that it has been extended, Most Favoured Nation. People to people contact between the two countries has improved and both are discussing steps on easing visa facilities. The Prime Minister has visited Russia and has also met Presidents of China and America to underline the importance of equation with India. New Delhi expects to become the Security Council's permanent member next year because China, the only country to bar the entry, has given favourable hints.

(Continued on Page 8)

‘About Lohia’

Bapu Heddurshetti's comments 'About Lohia' (Janata, November 22, 2011), in response to RJ Kochar's article, reflect the rankle harboured by many PSPites for Dr. Lohia. It is true that he did not get a formal degree for his Ph-D, but his thesis was approved by his examiners and they also gave their reports after the viva-voce. Lohia did not get the degree because under the rules of the University, the student was required to deposit 150 printed copies of the thesis. Lohia might not have been in position to fulfill this requirement due to lack of money or time. He had to leave Germany immediately after his exam, according to the advice of his teacher and also due to urgency of Civil Disobedience Movement in India and rise of Hitlerism in Germany. After returning to India he plunged into the freedom struggle and didn't care to procure the paper certificate. Perhaps, he had lost his copy of the thesis during journey from Germany to India. Lohia

aspired for the substance and not for the symbol. Does Bapu Heddurshetti suggest that Lohia should have aspired to get the paper certificate when his country was engaged in life and death struggle? Lohia never used the prefix 'Dr.' with his name and if his friends, colleagues and admirers used the prefix, which he well-deserved, why should any gentleman object, unless Lohia had tried to take up a university job on the basis of his degree.

As regards some unpleasant words used by Lohia for Nehru, JP, Kriplani etc. in informal chats, Lohia himself has accepted his mistake and stopped visiting Coffee Houses when he came to know that some of his friends were giving currency to these expressions. But Nehru, JP, Kriplani and their devotees have used more unpleasant language against Lohia and they never regretted. Does Bapu know this? Perhaps, he doesn't want to.

— **Mastram Kapoor**

Lokpal Debate

The debate in Parliament on the proposed Lokpal legislation has unfortunately touched a low nadir; instead of discussing the legislation in a sober atmosphere and with conscious effort to arrive at as much consensus as possible, the political parties, instead, indulged in mutual attacks.

Government's furtive slip in of various quotas including the minorities was a deliberate ploy with an eye on U.P. Elections, notwithstanding the doubt on legality of it expressed by former Supreme Court Judges and jurists. Could anyone even imagine that the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition, irrespective of their party affiliation and non-political Chief Justice of India (that is, the selection committee) not include as members from amongst Muslims and women, when any number of them are available on their own merit? Why this non-issue was loud-mouthed unless it was a device to stall the Lokpal legislation. Let us not forget that these Mulayam/Lalu groups were the ones who sabotaged Women Reservation bill by wantonly insisting a sub-quota in Women Reservation Bill thus embarrassing Sonia Gandhi and Sushma Swaraj who had earlier without any embarrassment embraced and congratulated each other at their victory in the Lok Sabha, but had to beat a retreat in the Rajya Sabha

The suggestion that if there are any allegations against the Prime Minister they would be decoratively pigeon-holed and brought out after he had remitted office (which may be even five years later) does not

make any sense. Are we living in a democracy or under a king who was supposed to be a representative of the Divine. Recently a sitting Prime Minister of Italy was forced to resign on corruption charge proved against him by a court magistrate. Similarly Chirac, Prime minister of France, has been sentenced to seven years and the President of Israel is being sent to jail on the grounds of moral impropriety.

The most contentious matter of C.B.I. remains unresolved. His appointment should be by a joint committee consisting of Lokpal and the standing committee of Parliament. Give C.B.I. director a fixed tenure for say five or 10 years. He should have full administrative control over the staff of C.B.I. and earmarked funds from the consolidated fund. There would be no interference with his day-to-day functioning from the Central Government or Lokpal. However, Lokpal would be entitled to ask for and receive reports from him at regular intervals and also authorized to convey its decisions on such matters. He shall not be removed from service except in the manner and on like grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court – the same manner of removal applies to the removal of Chief Election Commissioner.

I for one would not limit the choice necessarily to a police official and it could even be from outside the service. If it is decided to have a Chief Vigilance Commissioner, the same conditions and procedure will apply as applicable to Director of C.B.I.

Surprisingly not withstanding bitter wrangling on other aspects

all members of the Parliament are unanimously agreeing to keep themselves immune from the ambit of Lokpal or even Directors of C.B.I. for their corrupt actions and bribery if it is done inside the Parliament. To me this is scandalous and unacceptable. In their defence Members of Parliament invoke Article 105 of the Constitution, and the widely criticized majority judgment of (3 against 2) in Narsimma Rao case (1999-I believe the matter is referred to a larger bench). The minority Judgment however warned that this interpretation could lead to charter for corruption so as to elevate Members of Parliament as "super-citizens, immune from criminal responsibility". It would indeed be ironic if a claim for immunity from prosecution founded on the need to ensure the independence of Members of Parliament in exercising their right to speak or cast their vote in Parliament, could be put forward by a Member who has bartered away his independence by agreeing to speak or vote in a particular manner in lieu of illegal gratification that has been paid or promised. By claiming the immunity such a Member would only be seeking a licence to indulge in such corrupt conduct. In other countries such a conduct of MPs is treated as criminal, for instance since, 1875 in Australia.

To invoke Article 253 of the Constitution for enacting Lokayuktas is of doubtful legality and imperishable in our federal set up. Surely no state can resist the public sentiment built for Lokayukta.

The matter of Lokpal is too important and needs to be discussed more seriously and not under

pressure of forthcoming elections in Punjab and especially in U.P. Also the panicky reaction of Central Government to Anna Hazare threat of fast compounded by the Opposition wanting to cash on it when they went to Anna Hazare sit-in to cosy up to him. Their puerile excuse that they wanted to explain their point of view is unacceptable. Political parties hold their own meetings to explain their position to the public.

We go to Jantar Mantar to show our solidarity with the victims of forced displacement and the illegal actions of the government on the deprived and poor. The parties do not go to the sit-in of a person, they are now wanting to deride and ridicule. Of course I agree that Anna Hazare has full rights to muster support and arouse masses and exercise his democratic rights and to put pressure on the government - and even the

parliament - to pass a particular law because the ultimate sovereign are the people. But there is a caveat that this discussion requires a calmer atmosphere. Could not the parties unanimously agree to adjourn the discussions till after the pressure of U.P. Elections is over with a pledge to pass the legislation as first item when the Parliament begins the next session?

– Rajindar Sachar

Lokpal or Shasakpal ?

The Bill ultimately presented in the Parliament by the UPA government is not just disappointing but insulting for the people and their representatives with the turbulence within parties and the role of the people vis-a-vis Parliament. Whom does it try to protect, is also a big question. Appraising the details of the Lokpal Authority proposed, any sensible and sensitive person or organisation would surely assert, it's protecting the government, those in power, the politicians and not the people. It may better be termed Shasakpal and not Lokpal.

The ultimate result of the intense dialogues to wider national debate on the issue has not only led to an empowerment of people but to clarifying the role and status of the electorate vis-a-vis the elected. It's obvious that a large percentage of the "We the People of India" have supported the People's Bill, 'Janlokal' - proposing an independent multi-layered, comprehensive authority to deal with the corrupt, complaints against them and mitigate corruption. The Lokpal Bill on the other hand, is left with a body, which neither has the power for investigation into

serious complaints nor for grievance redressal and compliance, hence of little or no strength.

Dissecting the 'Lokpal' into three or four separate Bills – Citizen's Charter and Grievance redressal Bill, Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill and Whistleblower Protection Bill is not to make it 'Constitutional' but rather 'Compartmental' to the extent of making it ineffective. Keeping the present structure of CBI, CVC, Police intact and out of the preview of the Anti-Corruption Authority, united through multiple levels as in Janlokal Bill, devoid of political (government) intervention but at the same time within the constitutional framework, in spite of some strengthening is avoiding any radical and yet reasonable solution.

Some Unanswered Questions

Why can't corruption behind non-redressal of grievances be dealt with under Lokpal through Public Grievances Redressal Officer – to Judicial Officers – to Lokpal ?

Why can't C and D (wherever it exists even after Sixth pay Commission) categories of Employees be brought under Lokpal

for the Central Government and Lokayukta for States.

Why can't corruption cases under CBI be under Lokpal with administrative control and even for investigation ?

Why should the corrupt Justices, supposed to be protectors and defenders of justice be out? Why can't MPs be in, when they are corrupt, beyond their right to expression.

There are no clear and rational answers to any of these questions.

Question of Reservations

No doubt, whatever has happened is more due to the people's wish expressed through their people's movements than the political will; which was lacking over 48 years! However, every time, as in the case of Women's Reservation Bill, the finalisation is getting postponed under some pretext. Whether it's making Lokpal a Constitutional Authority or reservations in Lokpal Committee members or staff, we need not oppose or question. We are for a just and strong authority. But are all legal and constitutional

angles in religion based reservation dealt with? No. The matter is before Supreme Court and subjudice.

Laloo Prasad Yadav, Ram Vilas Paswan, SP and BSP or any other party while expecting a vote from Dalits and minorities, may continue to pursue the cause of representation through reservations but at least meanwhile, should facilitate the Anti-Corruption Act with all Government Employees, including C & D and all corrupt citizens which would be the most pro-dalit, pro-poor and pro-Constitution position.

If they are conscious of sanctity of the Constitution, they should be upholding bringing all the citizens including the MPs themselves under the Lokpal Act, following Article 14.

Questions raised by BJP at the last moment on the inclusion of the Lokayuktas in States going against the federal structure is not understandable since they should have followed the option of insistence of a strong Act with respect to both Lokpal and Lokayukta but not leave it open unless they too want to permit the States like Gujarat to go without

Lokayukta in spite of tall claims. What worth federalism, if the states are not fulfilling their obligation as regards State subjects such as water and not incorporating the letter and spirit of the enabling Acts like PESA, 1996 till date in their respective state level Panchayati Raj Acts?

The extended session of Parliament from 27th-29th is their last chance to fulfill this expectation on this most serious judgement. People are watching. No party should insult the Parliament resolution, the constitutional mandate.

—**Medha Patkar, Sandeep Pandey, Prafulla Samantara, Anand Mazgaonkar**
National Alliance of People's Movements

Not through Haste

At a time when civil society is arguing feverishly over the details of government's move to set up the Lok Pal (Ombudsman) machinery to deal with corruption, reservation can be dynamite. So let the proposal of such step be analysed carefully. What it means is that out of the 9-members Lok Pal, 50 percent of persons will be from the Schedules Castes, Schedules Tribes, women and backward classes. This is the first time since independence when the principle of reservation has been extended to top positions. Tomorrow a similar demand may be made on the appointment of judges in the High Courts and the Supreme Court. This principle, pernicious enough, stops the best talent from the country being chosen for top jobs. Instead, anyone can be brought as long as he or she fulfills the qualification for reservations.

This approach has already forced the country to lower the standard of education and the quality of government service. Yet nothing

anybody can do even to fix the time limit for reservations because any suggestion on the subject creates furore from the interested groups. All political parties are slaves to reservations because they link them with their electoral prospects. The ruling Congress has too fixed its eyes on elections in January-March 2012 in five states including UP, Punjab and Uttrakhand. Reservations may influence the dalits who have turned their back on the party.

Yet, something more acrimonious happened when the bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha. Members belonging to Other Backward Classes (OBCs) demanded a quota for Muslims. The government gave in because it also has the Muslim electorate to placate. Although Muslims have been allotted 4.5 per cent from the 27 per cent of reservations provided in the Constitution, the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) is up in arms and has threatened a civil war if the quota is given to Muslims. On the other hand,

the Muslim leaders have demanded the 10 per cent reservations outside the Constitutional provision of 27 per cent. The Supreme Court gave a ruling some time ago that the total reservations cannot exceed 50 per cent. Surprisingly, the Congress has already decided to give Muslims a quota of 4.5 percent in educational institutions and employment. But this decision is yet to be implemented and the quota will be from overall reservation of 27 per cent.

The quota is probably illegal because the Constitution forbids any reservation on the basis of religion. Cases are pending before the Supreme Court from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka where a quota has been given to religious minorities, Muslims and Christians. Legal experts have pronounced that the government's step to give reservation to religious minorities is unconstitutional. But in the meanwhile the atmosphere of parochialism is affecting different communities and creating an

embarrassing situation for civil society. The Congress could not have hit the ethos of pluralism more severely than it has done by introducing reservations in top positions.

This may well be a move to defeat the Lokpal bill in Parliament because the BJP would never agree to a quota for Muslims. It, along with the left which is against reservation in principle, can defeat the bill in the Rajya Sabha, the Upper House, where the Congress and its allies cannot muster a majority. But the BJP should be prepared to bear the responsibility for not having the bill passed by the end of the year, a demand made by the Gandhian Anna Hazare who is leading a movement for the passage of Lokpal bill. I am unable to make out why the Congress withdrew its support at the last minute to the draft bill which had got the near consensus at the all-party meeting at the Prime Minister's residence. The hitch may have been because of the reported opposition by Congress president Sonia Gandhi who has said that they are ready to take on Anna Hazare. The last time it was her son, Rahul Gandhi, who had diluted the bill finalised by the Parliament Standing Committee. Its Chairman Abhishek Manu Singhvi has admitted that he met the Congress high command on the eve of the bill's finalisation. The government has not in fact

taken Lokpal bill demand seriously from the beginning and has not understood how infuriated the civil society is. Even then the bill it has brought before Parliament under pressure gives control of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to the Personnel department at the centre. CBI has been used by the different government for their political purpose. Retired directors of CBI have written about their experience, how they were asked to move or not to move against such and such person. Even the appointment of apex body to select persons for the Lokpal machinery the panel is that of the Prime Minister, the Opposition Leader and the Chief Justice of India. How can the Chief Justice be on the selection committee when the appeal against the wrong or motivated appointment lies with the Chief Justice. It is however good to note that both the government and Anna Hazare have agreed to keep the judiciary out of ambit of Lokpal. But the appointment of Judicial Commission, sought through a bill, requires more teeth. Also the Commission should have some eminent public men as its members. It seems that the bill has been drafted in haste and probably with the purpose that it should fall either in Parliament or in the Court.

True, the government has accommodated Anna Hazare on many points but if one were to

analyze the provisions it would be clear that what the government gives by one hand takes away by another. Yet I wish the Lokpal bill had the constitutional authority which the BJP has unthinkingly forced to fall in the Lok Sabha for not being able to get the required two-third majority.

Against this backdrop I can understand the pressure by Anna Hazare to pass the bill but I am unable to appreciate his fast for 3 days when Parliament had already taken up the bill. In any case he had given the call for jail bharo (fill the jail) from January. His enunciation is to propagate against the Congress in the five states assembly to defeat the party is suspect. This unnecessarily gives strength to the allegation that the whole movement is political and meant to help the BJP and some other opposition parties.

The country is going through political and economic crises. Any wrong step by government or by civil society can harm the nation and unwittingly support the parochial and desperate elements. I recall the words of US President Jefferson from his inaugural address "Let us reflect that, having banished from our land that religious intolerance under which mankind so long bled and suffered, we have yet gained little if we countenance a political intolerance as despotic, as wicked, and capable of as bitter and bloody persecutions."

– Kuldip Nayar

One step forward, two steps back

Hopelessly ineffectual and constitutionally suspect, the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Bill, 2011 is nothing less than a betrayal of national trust. It is inexcusable that a Bill, substantially weaker than the August 2011 version that was forced to be

withdrawn on the widespread belief that it would be fortified in key areas, has been tabled in the Lok Sabha. The whole purpose of the exercise is supposed to be the creation of a strong, effective, and credible mechanism to go after corruption,

especially political corruption, which has assumed monstrous proportions in India. The key provisions of the new Bill relating to the selection of the nine-member Lokpal, its anti-corruption functions and powers, and administrative

control over India's premier criminal investigation agency mock that purpose.

In the first place, Section 4 of the Bill, which provides for a five-member Selection Committee to choose the chairman and eight other members of the Lokpal, gives the government political control over this process. Secondly, the separation of the power to enquire, investigate, and prosecute set out in the Bill is much worse than the scheme contained in the earlier Lokpal Bill, Section 20 of which gave the Lokpal its own investigation wing. In allowing the Lokpal only an Inquiry Wing headed by a Director of Inquiry "for the purpose of conducting preliminary inquiry into any offence alleged to have been committed by a public servant punishable under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988" and denying it its own investigation wing, the new Bill neuters the anti-corruption watchdog. Allowing the Lokpal "a Prosecution Wing headed by the Director of Prosecution for the purpose of prosecution of public servants in relation to any complaint by the Lokpal under this Act" may look like a step forward. But this cannot possibly make up for the failure to provide for a clean process of independent investigation that is safeguarded from executive interference. At a time when the Lokayukta in a State such as Karnataka has its own investigation wing – something it has used to very good effect – it is retrogressive to withhold this instrument from the Lokpal.

At the same time, the new Bill has sought to keep the Central Bureau of Investigation out of the Lokpal's purview ostensibly on the ground that it should have autonomy over its investigations. Given the agency's

record of bowing to the diktats of its political masters, there is no reason to believe that investigations, even those that are Lokpal-referred and Lokpal-monitored, will be free of political interference. The Centre, which has retained administrative control (read: promotions, transfers, etc.) of the CBI via the Ministry of Personnel, knows better than most that he who pays the piper calls the tune. While the proposal that a new panel (comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Chief Justice of India or his nominee) selects the Director of the CBI will go some way in enhancing the credibility of the agency, the opportunity to confer on it genuine independence is being lost.

Just as problematic is the constitutional validity of some basic provisions of the Bill. The inclusion of minorities among the groups given reservation in the nine-member body is bound to be challenged on the ground that it amounts to a quota being given on grounds of religion. While this issue has little bearing on tackling corruption, the deep and seemingly irreconcilable political divisions it has created, reflected in the manner in which it dominated the parliamentary debate on the Bill, is bound to have a bearing on its passage. Is this a ploy to let anti-corruption legislation fall victim to a wholly extraneous issue – reservation? Will it be allowed to degenerate, as in the case of the women's reservation bill, into a legislative exercise that everyone claims to support but few really want?

There have also been serious concerns on another constitutional front – federalism. While it is hard to fault the principle of having

comparable mechanisms and instruments to go after corruption at the central and State levels, the legislative procedure adopted is open to question. Rather than mandating the creation of a Lokpal-like structure in every State, would it not have been in keeping with India's federal structure and regional sensitivities for the central legislation to have model or enabling provisions for constituting effective Lokayuktas in States? Given the strong national public mood against corruption, it is unlikely that State governments would risk going against it.

Unfortunately, the improvements in the new Bill have been overshadowed by the slew of regressive alterations. The inclusion of the Prime Minister under the Lokpal with certain exceptions is a step up from the earlier stipulation that permitted any inquiry only after he or she demitted office. The new Bill brings both Group 'A' and 'B' officers under the Lokpal's ambit. While this is short of Team Anna's demand that Group 'C' and 'D' officials be covered as well, it is an improvement on earlier drafts, under which the Lokpal's purview was limited to Group 'A' officers. Further, while the 'C' and 'D' categories will be covered by the Central Vigilance Commission, cases relating to them will be reviewed by the Lokpal. The idea of granting constitutional status to the office of the Lokpal would have had traction had the Bill vested the body with the strength and self-sufficiency to make a serious impact on corruption. Unfortunately, a mixture of bad faith and a reluctance to loosen the grip on the handle of power have contributed to the making of a Bill that has caused deep divisions in Parliament and enough disenchantment to fuel a new round of Team Anna-led protests against

the Centre. The country is no closer to a consensus on the Lokpal Bill than it was many months ago.

– **Editorial in *The Hindu*,
December 24, 2011**

(Continued from Page 2)

The biggest plus point of India is that the country is settling down to its democratic and secular ethos. Hindus and Muslims have learnt that they have to coexist. True, the minorities are increasingly assertive because their slice from the cake continues to be small. But their fight is democratic and within the precincts of the constitution. Their disappointment is in the slow process to bring Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi, guilty of pogrom, to book. The joint command of security forces eliminated Kishenji, a key leader of Maoists who are demoralized because of his absence but not deterred since poverty and under development in most areas still help them to thrive. New Delhi considers Maoists' repulsion as the biggest achievement in the year.

However, the stalling of parliament over minor problem has evoked cynicism over the system. People accept that parliament is the apex body. But the proposal to have the presidential system of government is being seriously discussed in influential quarters.

A least 9 per cent growth is required to eliminate poverty. It will be a challenging year again. Probably what India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said that the next generations were sentenced to hard work is true. Yet the confidence which the persons have developed in themselves and in the country, sustains hope that 2012 will see the sunlight increasing and the shadows receding. Optimism is a moral duty of every Indian.

An Interesting Blog

Pritish Nandy, MP (Shiv Sena Member of Rajya Sabha from 1968 to 1974)

I was an MP not very long ago. I loved those six years.

Everyone called me sir, not because of my age but because I was an MP.

And even though I never travelled anywhere by train during those years, I reveled in the fact that I could have gone anywhere I liked, on any train, first class with a bogey reserved for my family.

Whenever I flew, there were always people around to pick up my baggage, not because I was travelling business class but because I was an MP.

And yes, whenever I wrote to any Government officer to help someone in need, it was done. No, not because I was a journalist but because I was an MP.

The job had many perquisites, apart from the tax free wage of Rs 4,000.

Then the wages were suddenly quadrupled to Rs 16,000, with office expenses of Rs 20,000 and a constituency allowance of Rs 20,000 thrown in. I could borrow interest free money to buy a car, get my petrol paid, make as many free phone calls as I wanted. My home came free. So did the furniture, the electricity, the water, the gardeners, the plants. There were also allowances to wash curtains and sofa covers and a rather funny allowance of Rs 1,000 per day to attend Parliament, which I always thought was an MP's job in the first place! And, oh yes, we also got Rs 1 Crore a year (now enhanced

to Rs 2 Crore) to spend on our constituencies. More enterprising MPs enjoyed many more perquisites best left to your imagination. While I was embarrassed at being vastly overpaid for the job I was doing, they kept demanding more.

Today, out of 543 MPs in Lok Sabha, 315 are Crorepatis. That's 60 percent. 43 out of the 54 newly elected Rajya Sabha MPs are also millionaires. Their average declared assets are over Rs 25 Crore each. That's an awfully wealthy lot of people in whose hands we have vested our destiny.

The assets of your average Lok Sabha MP have grown from Rs 1.86 Crore in the last house to Rs 5.33 Crore. That's 200 percent more. And, as we all know, not all our MPs are known to always declare all their assets. Much of these exist in a colour not recognised by our tax laws. That's fine, I guess.

Being an MP gives you certain immunities, not all of them meant to be discussed in a public forum.

If you think it pays to be in the ruling party, you are dead right: 7 out of 10 MPs from the Congress are Crorepatis. The BJP have 5. MPs from some of the smaller parties like SAD, TRS and JD (Secular) are all Crorepatis while the NCP, DMK, RLD, BSP, Shiv Sena, National Conference and Samajwadi Party have more Crorepatis than the 60 percent average.

Only the CPM and the Trinamool, the two Bengal based parties, don't

(Continued on Page 12)

Sufi Islam Versus Wahabi Islam

Asghar Ali Engineer

Recently a huge congregation of Sunni (Sufi) Muslims in Moradabad denounced Wahabi Islam and the Spokesperson of the All India Ulama Mashaikh Board Syed Mohammad Ashraf and leader of the Sufi Islam said, “we do not accept leadership of Wahabi Islam” (hamen inki na qayadat na imamat qabool hai). Syed Babar Ashraf said, “80 percent of Indian Muslims followed the Sunni Sufi tradition while Wahabis wielded control over just 13-14 percent of the community “But, he said, “a large section of the Urdu press has boycotted us. They are controlled by hardliners”. Though there has been a serious difference between the two, it was for the first time that public denunciation came, surprising many and not so surprising some.

For outsiders all Muslims are one in India. In fact they consider Muslims a monolithic bloc. However, it is far from true. Indian Muslims are highly diverse, as diverse as India culturally, linguistically, regionally as well as theologically. Indian Islam, it must be noted has been thoroughly Indianised in terms of culture, local customs and traditions. This is reflected in various ways including celebration of festivals, marriage, birth and death rituals etc.

Some purists of course opposed this Indianisation and worked for de-indianising Islam through medieval ages also. Mujaddid alf-e-Sani during Jahangir’s time was one among them. He was opposed to Chishti school of Sufi Islam (which has been predominant in India) and which believes in what is known as

Wahdat al-Wujud (Unity of Being). This School demolished all walls of separation between religions.

Mujaddid alf-e-Sani proposed the doctrine of what he called Wahdat-e-Shuhud (Unity of Witnessing). However, this school never became popular in India or even outside India. It remained confined to a few religious elite. Some separatists in 20th century used Mujaddid as their icon of pure Islam and also for consolidating their separatist movement under Islamic garb. In fact it is too much to read political separatism in Mujaddid’s religious doctrines.

We are mentioning Mujaddid alf-e-Sani here only to show there always have been some tension between pure Islam and Indian Islam which Chishtiya Sufis preached. It is interesting to note that Hasan Nizami Sajjada Nashin (Keeper) of the Dargah Hazrat Nizamuddin in Delhi, wrote a wonderful book *Fatimi Dawat-e-Islam* in which he has documented in detail how Sufis adopted various Indian rituals, customs and traditions to popularize Islam in India and how successfully they Indianized Islam.

Thus it will be seen that Sufi Islam reflects regional variations of cultures from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. Sufi Islam has always been pluralistic and inclusive and its emphasis has always been on spiritual aspects of religion (tariqat) than Shariat (legal path) though Shariat is not neglected. It is closer to what we can call bhakti marg among Hindus. Sufi Islam lays

more emphasis on devotion.

Sufis, though they were great scholars of Persian and Arabic - two languages in India in which Islamic literature was produced - they preferred to write in local languages. Baba Farid Ganj Shakar, a great Sufi saint from Punjab wrote in Punjabi and is considered as the first Punjabi poet and Guru Nanak has quoted his verses in *Adi Granth Sahib* and hence Baba Farid is highly respected by Sikhs. Punjab University, Chandigarh, has also created a Chair in his name i.e. Baba Farid Chair and also publishes a journal.

Sufi Islam being pluralistic in approach was tremendously popular among people of different religions, specially among Hindus. One can see large number of Hindus at Sheikh Moinuddin Chishti’s Dargah, Ajmer or Hazrat Nizamuddin’s Dargah at Delhi and so on. Thousands of Hindu women come and take vow for offering chador (sheet of cloth) if their problem is solved.

It is interesting to note that Dara Shikoh, the elder son of Shah Jahan who was appointed heir apparent by him (Shah Jahan) was a Sufi belonging to Qadariyah School (which did not have much following in India) was great scholar of Hinduism and he learnt Sanskrit in order to understand Hinduism through original sources. He translated Upanishads into Persian and maintained that he found the concept of tawhid after Qur’an only in Upanishads.

He also wrote a seminal work *Majma'ul Bahrayn* which is a comparative study of Hinduism and Islam and in which he shows how similar are these two religions. In fact it should be a compulsory study for students to promote national unity and integration. However, it has been totally neglected and hardly anyone knows even its name. Instead books promoting serious misunderstandings, even downright animosity, are taught in schools and colleges.

It is Sufi Islam which not only brought Hindus and Muslims together but also created our rich heritage of composite culture. It is highly necessary that our youngsters know more and more of this rich heritage.

The Wahabi Islam, on the other hand, came into existence, in 18th century in Najd, a part of what is called today Saudi Arabi. It was Muhammad Abdul Wahhab who was its founder. Abdul Wahhab was totally against Sufi version of Islam and he thought it is corruption of Islamic teachings.

Sufi Islam believes in visiting graves of Sufi saints and reciting *Fatihah* (prayer invoking name of Sufi saint and taking vows in the name of Sufi saints. Abdul Wahhab denounced all this and thought Islam cannot permit this and this is against the teachings of Islam as it believes in unity of God (*tawhid*) and is *shirk* (associating partners with God) - thus Sufi Islam is totally anti-Islam and must be rejected. The Wahabi Islam is opposed to even invoking name of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and opposes visiting Prophet's grave and praying there. Here we are not trying to judge who is right and who is wrong. I am

only trying to portray what is what.

May be Wahhabis are right from their own perspective but it would be equally wrong to denounce Sufi Islam as corruption of Islamic teachings. No ideology in the world, be it religious or political, can remain 'pure' as some ideologues would like to desire. Even Marxism drastically changed when imported to China.

It is also interesting to note that those who desire to use any ideology for power insist on 'purity', even extremism and those who desire to make it pro-people take it closer to people's culture and thus 'compromise' its original purity.

While Wahhabis desired to capture power which they subsequently did, Sufis kept their distance from power. Sufi Islam is inclusive and pro-people and hence does not want to aspire for power. In fact power becomes problematic as it is always exploitative and anti-people.

Even democratic power structure tends to become exclusivistic for certain groups and communities and does not remain pro-people as it ought to be. Sufi Islam, though Muslim dynasties were ruling over India, maintained its distance from rulers and ruling dynasties. It remained closer to common people rather than ruling classes.

Thus among Muslims, all those who desired power were not much enthusiastic about Sufi Islam. Even poet Iqbal initially denounced Sufism as its teachings seriously interfere with the philosophy of what he called '*khudi*' i.e. elevation of self. Iqbal at that stage thought Sufism leads to *inkisar* (humility) as against *khudi* so necessary for a

power wielding personality.

However, Iqbal did realize later inner richness of Sufi approach and came to greatly appreciate poetry of Hafiz, Sa'adi and Rumi and he calls Rumi as 'Pir' i.e. spiritual teacher and quotes him repeatedly in his poems. Indian soil was very fertile for Sufi Islam and specially Chishtiyah Sufism which was founded by Muhiyuddin Ibn Arabi on the philosophy of Unity of Being i.e. Being is one and we all are its manifestation.

India had developed this approach in its own way and Muhiyuddin Ibn Arabi in Spain in his own way. When these *Wahdat-ul-Wujud* Sufis came to India the two met and flourished. That is why *Wahdat al-Shuhud* of *Mujaddid alf-e-Sani* found no takers in India and now it is only history whereas *Wahdat al-Wujud* Islam is still flourishing.

Wahhabi Islam, as pointed out above, is essentially a political Islam and it found some takers in 19th century when the Mughal rule declined and Muslims suffered both politically as well as economically. Its history in India is much chequered one. It began as a revolt against the British as well as against the feudal lords who exploited the peasants. In Bengal the peasantry was mainly Muslim and *Dadu Miyan* and *Titu Miyan*, both described as Wahhabis led to revolt. However, in U.P. it acquired mainly anti-British tone.

In India the Wahabis are generally known as *Deobandis* as they had established the famous seminary *Darul Uloom Deoband* in 19th century and from day one they had been opposing the British rule and played prominent role throughout freedom movement. They supported

the Indian National Congress and its ideology of secular democracy and opposed Jinnah's two nation theory. Thus one finds this contradiction among Deobandis – politically they have been progressive but religiously and theologically rather conservative.

The Deobandis though technically not the followers of Abdul Wahhab of Najd, are closer to Shah Waliyullah Dehlavi who tried to work out synthesis of Wahdat al-Wujud and Mujaddid alf-e-Sani wahda al-Shuhud to reconcile the two opposing ideologies. However, it did not succeed much. Shah Waliyullah, an eminent theologian did not reject Sufism but did not accept philosophy of Wahdat al-Wujud without reservation either.

But Deobandis of late have adopted hostile attitude towards Sufi Islam and both try to revile each other. As Saudis are quite intolerant of Sufi Islam, Deobandis who are going closer to Saudis ideologically, are also becoming more and more intolerant of Sufi Islam. Saudis are pouring money in the Islamic world to popularize Salafi Islam which is most intolerant and exclusivistic and wants to go back in history and practice Islam as practiced by the earliest Muslims.

Of late due to Saudi influence Salafi Islam is spreading fast among Muslims and this leads to extremism. During anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan America also promoted Salafi Islam as at that time Islamic extremism was thought to be American ally. Today America is paying price for that. America never hesitates to exploit religious fanaticism, if it helps its purpose even temporarily. Thus America is

(Continued on Page 12)

In search of the real self

Zahur Zaidi

On a trip to Yogyakarta, the cultural capital of Indonesia, I saw the most beautiful ballet - a two-hour Ramayana performed with the Prambanan Temple (dedicated to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) as the backdrop. The following day, on a visit to a yoga centre, I was proud to see Indonesian boys and girls practicing yoga.

One of them, wearing a jilbab (the Islamic head scarf) and otherwise proficient, declined to do the Surya Namaskar. After the class, Dinna Saraswati (that was her name) explained that as a Muslim, it was against her religion to pray to the sun. Yoga for her was only a 'physical exercise'.

My host for the evening was Indra Kusuma, a Javanese member of the Ramayana ballet troupe. While he was wearing a skull-cap, his son Mohammad Anas was clad in a T-shirt that had Che Guevara's grim expression printed on it.

Later in Jakarta, a friend who had worked as an engineer in an oil company in West Asia said that Indonesians were unusual as far as their practice of Islam was concerned. While bidding him goodbye, I said 'Khudahafiz', the standard north Indian Muslim way to bid adieu. My friend said I should have said 'Allah hafiz' as Khuda is a Persian word while Allah is Arabic.

In the village located on the fringes of Awadh in Uttar Pradesh, where I come from, we grew up hearing both bhajans and azaan. My grandfather wore a dhoti when at home and also headed the organising committee of Dhanushjag - our village ballet organised during Dussehra.

Islam is my religion but we always participated in Ramlilas, Holi and Diwali. Flip through the pages of Islamic history and you would encounter Salman Farsi - a companion of the Prophet. Salman was Persian and remained one till he died. His association with the Prophet did not make him Salman Arabi.

In Egypt and North Africa, Afghanistan and Iran, the advent of Islam changed religious beliefs but cultural practices more or less remained the same. To my ignorant mind, there was no conflict between faith and cultural identities.

Suddenly I notice people trying to rectify my ways. Because we are Muslims, all of us must be recognisably Islamic (read Arab). Because Islam and Arab are interchangeable or maybe because only an Arab can be Islamic. I am a Muslim but my first name is not Arab. So what am I? Looking for answers I came across this quote from Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who said, "I am a Muslim and profoundly conscious of that fact that I have inherited Islam's glorious tradition of the last 1,300 years. I am not prepared to lose even a small part of that legacy. But I am equally proud of the fact that I am an Indian... I am an essential element, which has gone to build India. I can never surrender this claim."

My doubts have been laid to rest. Indra Kusuma, my Indonesian friend, your name is fine and you do a great job performing Ramayana ballets everyday. And as for you my Indian friend in Jakarta, I would only say, "Khudahafiz!!"

(Continued from Page 11)

no less responsible for spreading Salafi Islam.

Again because of Saudi influence the Government also gives more importance to Deobandis than to representatives of Sufi Islam though they are in great majority. Recently when our peace yatra from Ayodhya to Nizamuddin Awliya ended at the Mausoleum of Hazrat Nizamuddin the Sajjadanashin bitterly complained that we are not included in any governmental delegations though were most inclusive and people of all communities Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians visit this place. He pleaded with us to use our influence with the government to include them in official delegations.

It was in this background and frustration that Syed Babar Ashraf spoke at a rally at Moradabad. It is unfortunate that Muslims while swearing by unity (ittihad) are indulging in sectarian fights. In this respect one must admire the efforts of Shah Waliyullah, a man of social vision, who tried to reconcile the two schools of thought but his ideas have been marginalized and intolerance is growing.

India is a land of diversity and tolerance and Sufi Islam prospered here because of this nature of Indian soil. Some Muslims may not accept Sufi Islam for ideological reasons and there is nothing wrong about it but they should show respect for those who are devout Sufis and believe in praying at Sufi Dargahs. Sufi Islam is after all more spiritual in nature and Sufis, though do not renounce the world as renunciation has no place in Islam but they do believe in controlling desires and keep their distance from power. That is why it is more inclusive and pluralistic in nature.

(Continued from Page 11)

field Crorepatis. The CPM has 1 correlate out of 16 MPs; the Trinamool has 7 out of 19. This shows in the state-wise average. West Bengal and Kerala have few correlate MPs while Punjab and Delhi have only correlate MPs and

Haryana narrowly misses out on this distinction with one MP, poor guy, who's not a correlate.

Do MPs become richer in office? Sure they do. Statistics show that the average assets of 304 MPs who contested in 2004 and then re-contested last year grew 300 percent. And, yes, we're only talking about declared assets here.

But then, we can't complain. We are the ones who vote for the rich. Over 33 percent of those with assets above Rs 5 Crore won the last elections while 99.5 percent of those with assets below Rs 10 lakhs lost! Apart from West Bengal and the North East, every other state voted for correlate MPs. Haryana grabbed first place with its average MP worth Rs 18 Crore. Andhra is not far behind at 16.

But no, this is not enough for our MPs. It's not enough that they are rich, infinitely richer than those who they represent, and every term makes them even richer. It's not enough that they openly perpetuate their families in power. It's not enough that all their vulgar indulgences and more are paid for by you and me through backbreaking taxes. It's not enough that the number of days they actually work in Parliament are barely 60 in a year.

The rest of the time goes in squabbling and ranting. Now they want a 500 percent pay hike

and perquisites quadrupled. The Government, to buy peace, has already agreed to a 300 percent raise but that's not good enough for our MPs. They want more, much more.

And no, I'm not even mentioning that 150 MPs elected last year have criminal cases against them, with 73 serious, very serious cases ranging from rape to murder.

Do you really think these people deserve to earn 104 times what the average Indian does.

After all, the MPs in India are perhaps the most privileged of any country in terms of salaries and emoluments and entitlements. The value of all the perks that a MP gets in proportion to per capita income, to say nothing about the aam admi on Rs.32 per day, is the highest of any country in the world.

—Meghnad Desai in
The Sunday Express,
December 35, 2011

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on
Mumbai Bank
in favour of
JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai 400 007

Manu, Macaulay and Manmohan

G. Haragopal

India is one society that has inherited one of the most iniquitous social structures that remained stubborn notwithstanding several socio-political movements including the freedom movement. Manu, the Brahmnical Hindu ideologue provided the framework and justification for not allowing all sections of the society, more so the labouring classes and women of all communities not having access to written word. This dictum survives through thousands of years after the written word had been invented by the human species. The language of the powerful, Sanskrit, through which they wrote and communicated was their exclusive prerogative. Hinduism perhaps is the only religion that believes that human beings were born unequal and prevents equal access to God, supposedly the creator of man and woman. The denial of access to formal learning not only divided and hierarchised the society, but provided scope and space for manipulation by the propertied and the powerful. This social arrangement continued all through the medieval and colonial period.

It was during the colonial period that the English language started replacing Sanskrit and other local languages. After the first war of independence in 1857, Macaulay advocated the introduction of English language and held that it was the only way to create a support base for the colonial rule. He thought, rightly so, that the English educated Indians would be Indian

in colour and English in belief and behaviour. It was again the upper castes who took advantage of their social position and linguistic skills and monopolized the opportunities in civil service, legal profession, media, teaching and so on. The English language was as alien to the people as Sanskrit except that the Christian missionaries opened schools where the hitherto forbidden sections had an entry point. In fact they provided access to God through Church and formal learning through schools. This opening up made no qualitative difference to the basic structure of social relations, but created a class of people, as Macaulay believed, who were entrapped into colonial mind-set and continue to perpetuate it even after six decades of the so-called victory of anti-colonial freedom struggle.

It was Jotirao and Savitribai Phule who realising the importance of role of education started schools, particularly for girls. Education for all as an idea entered the freedom movement in the early part of the last century and picked up momentum and by 1940s it came to be accepted by the Indian National Congress who resolved to universalise right to education within a decade after independence. Given the aspirations and promise of the freedom movement it ought to have been incorporated in the fundamental rights chapter but on the grounds of resources and the nation's preparedness it was pushed into non-justiciable directive principles of State policy.

The silver lining immediately after independence was that whatever or wherever schools existed or newly opened they were all publicly funded common schools resembling the 'neighbourhood schools' concept as all children living in the vicinity went to the same school and studied through their mother tongue as medium of instruction. The limitation was that there was no concerted effort to ensure that all children went to the school which resulted in an India that has the distinction of having the largest number of illiterates in the world. This policy, by and large, continued till 1985-86. There was a shift in the policy which instead of initiating measures to provide access and quality education to all children introduced the policy of multi-layered schools bringing in inequity and inequality as Manu and Macaulay did earlier.

The widespread mass unrest in India on various counts including the growing inequalities compelled the rulers to take some measures and Right to Education Act of 2009 is one such step which is supposed to have encoded the right to education as a fundamental right. While this step is important in letter, the spirit of the Act is not qualitatively different from Manu-Macaulay mindset. The Act should have straight away scrapped all the private schools and gone for common school through neighbourhood schools and raising the standards of each school to that of central school. Instead the Act talks of private-public partnership which in principle concedes the

continued presence of private schools at one level and accentuates the medium of instruction divide. It talks of 25 percent reservation of seats to poorer children in corporate schools. One starts wondering how a fundamental right could be so dividing and discriminatory. This has led to a country-wide debate whether the right in this form can ever be treated and accepted as a fundamental right. The public-private partnership is a device of the neo-liberal model to plunder public resources for private profiteering. The corporate schools used to amassing of wealth challenged the Act in the Courts opposing the admission of poor children into their schools. Assuming that the Court in principle concedes, which is very unlikely, what happens to the other 75 percent of the poor children condemned to study in government schools which are poorly funded and qualitatively inferior. Is it not the time that the nation in one voice demands that all children of this country in the age group of 0-18 have equal access to quality education though common schools, though neighbourhood schools?

The scenario in higher education is equally pitiable. There are six to eight bills waiting for parliamentary ratification. Of all the bills the most Macaulian is the Foreign Universities Bill. Kapil Sibal addressing the last All India Vice Chancellors' conference looked concerned about only two issues: the Foreign Universities Bill and introduction of semesterisation in Delhi University as if they are the only issues afflicting higher education. Of course, during the recent visit of Manmohan Singh to the USA, one of the items that came

Why Socialist Party ?

Pannalal Surana

Because Socialism is the only way to assure decent life-style for toiling men and women belonging to all religious communities in India.

Winds of change are blowing all over the world.

In a number of countries of the South American continent, people's upsurge threw away hegemony of the capitalists of the United States of America.

Parties and leaders committed to socialism have been enthroned through ballot box.

In Brazil, tillers of soil got legal titles to the lands they were cultivating for years together.

Brave people of Cuba repelled all assaults by the American imperialists. Indeed, in time of need, Cuban medical personnel treated the American citizens hit by severe natural calamities.

Oil has been liberated from the clutches of foreign multinational companies and brought under the control of the people of Venezuela and a few other countries in that continent.

Natural resources are being harnessed for betterment of life of the common man.

In a number of Arab, African and West Asian countries, people offered determined resistance to the autocratic rulers. As a result, many of the rulers had to

step down paving way for ushering in democratic regimes. Moderate Islam is permeating all political and social movements. Process of democratization is gathering momentum.

Even the citadels of capitalism like USA and a number of West European countries are being shaken by popular movements like 'Occupy Wall Street'. People are rising to revolt to convert "rule of one per cent, for one per cent, by one per cent" into government of the people, for the people and by the people. Financial institutions are to be regulated by Central Banks who are accountable to the Representative bodies and the people at large.

Can India remain far behind?

No.

Our great sovereign, secular and democratic republic is built on the sacrifices of the martyrs like Bhagat Singh and given shape by great visionary social reformers of the 19th century, and political leaders of the 20th century.

People of India have learnt the art of changing rulers through the ballot box.

With expansion of educational facilities, men and women belonging to downtrodden strata of society are coming into their own. They are asserting their rights through mass agitations. Forces of change have been unleashed on an unparalleled scale.

(Continued on Page 15)

Unfortunately, muscle-power and money-power are grabbing political power. Rulers, be they of the Congress brand or of the BJP variety, have pursued free trade policies and opened the gates of Indian economy to the corporates of rich countries. As a result, rate of unemployment has increased vastly. Inequalities, as between the rich and the poor and as between the metro centres and vast tracks of rural areas have increased. Price rise of essential commodities is eating into the vitals of the body politic. Even the communist parties are welcoming capitalists, both foreign and indigenous, in the name of paving the way of industrialization.

The main folly of all the leading mainstream political parties is that they are trying to follow blindly the development model of European countries and the USA, who have a very small proportion of population dependent on agriculture and had plundered African, Asian and Latin American countries for accumulation of capital on the strength of which their prosperity was achieved. It was unjust way of doing things.

Socialist Party staunchly advocates a totally different model of development based on decentralized pattern of industrialization as a complementary component of agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, fisheries, etc. Cooperative form of management will have to be adopted in all fields of economic activity.

Socialist Party stands for scrupulous regulation of financial institutions. It will strive to build up socially responsible structure of trade, both wholesale and retail.

Socialist Party stands for common free compulsory and qualitative education for all.

Socialist party stands for free medical care for all.

Socialist party stands for quick bestowal of legal titles to the lands cultivated by the tribals and OBC families.

Socialist Party stands committed to bringing about radical electoral reforms so that money-power and

muscle-power would-not be able to maneuver electoral processes.

Socialist Party aims at building a cadre-based party. Its activists at all levels will dedicate themselves to mobilizing the masses for attaining their just demands by peaceful means. The party activists will follow the dictum - simple living, high thinking.

Hence the people are requested to rally behind the banner of Socialist Party.

(Continued from Page 14)

up in the discussion with Obama was opening up of higher education for foreign investment. The Prime Minister in his Independence Day address to the nation from the Red Fort made a specific reference to the urgency of educational reforms. The saddest part of higher education is the pathetic conditions of State Universities. No state government, without exception, has any interest left in higher education as the sons and daughters of the ruling classes go for private medical, engineering, legal and other professional streams of education. The most prosperous are sending their children to foreign universities and are arguing that the this 'craze' can be met only by inviting foreign universities to the Indian soil. It is precisely this cause that led to serious cuts in grants, stopping recruitment of new staff and all forms of support of the state. In the same breath they also want to privatise accreditation, distance education, tribunalization of educational litigation, abolition of UGC and manning the new council for higher education with corporate representatives. The teaching fraternity lured by the 6th

Pay Commission evinced no interest in the neo-liberal assault on higher education.

It is in the wake of these drastic changes in school and university education, that the All India Forum for Right to Education held its national conference in Yusuf Meharely centre near Mumbai. The forum draws its membership from socialists, Lohiaites, Gandhians, leftists, radicals and democrats. They are drawn from 16 states of India and are engaged in building a nationwide movement against these undemocratic, uncalled for, anti-people reforms in education. It is time that spirit of freedom struggle is retrieved and we build a movement for an equitable, humane, fair and just society. The cause of education is one of the powerful weapons to realize this goal. This would invariably be a fight against Manu-Macaulay-Manmohan mind-set. The posterity may not forgive this generation of academia. The deprived sections are bound to carry their own battle against unjust society with or without the support of the academia.



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 66 No. 49

January 8, 2012

Alternative only option

Kuldip Nayar

Environment and Human Welfare

Ishwari Prasad

A Year of Changes

S. Viswam

The saga of the Lokpal Bill

Prashant Bhushan

Yes, Parliament is Supreme!

D. K. Giri

Why the lokpal bill could not become a law

Parasnath Chaudhary

Let us not lose sight of the main objective

Pannalal Surana

2011 was the year of the activist

Brij Khandelwal

Editor :

G. G. Parikh

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

How different are the dynamics of people's politics from the dynamics of electoral politics was clear by the turn the bill to constitute the institution of Lokpal (Ombudsman) to deal with corruption took in the Indian parliament. The first, dependent on the popular support, got nowhere. But the second, dictated by number game, succeeded because the political parties could interpret the status quo, the non-passage of the Lokpal bill, in the way it suited them electorally.

When Gandhian Anna Hazare was on fast and thousands were on the streets, the Lok Sabha passed the sense of the house resolution to promise an act to cover the three points raised by him: 1. Citizen's Charter including his right to have water and electricity, 2. the lower bureaucracy under Lokpal and 3. establishment of Lokayuktas in the states. The bill has conceded only one point, that is, the appointment of State Ombudsman (Lokayukta). And the government continues to retain the control of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

When the resolution was adopted, the dynamics of people's politics worked. Subsequently, the same house accepted a watered down bill because Anna was not on fast and the people

were only watching the outcome of the debate in parliament. There was no pressure on the government.

Still something worse happened in the Rajya Sabha because the bill emerging from the Lok Sabha was not even put to vote. True, the house had consumed the day, till midnight in speeches alone. But the manner in which the chairman, Vice-President Hamid Ansari adjourned the house sine die leaves many questions unanswered. The government could have extended the session but did not. Obviously, it was influenced by Anna Hazare breaking his fast one day earlier than the period he had announced and the venue, shifted to Mumbai from Delhi, did not draw an impressive crowd. Too many adjournments interrupted the house—Laloo Yadav, the joker in the pack, was handy—lessened time for the debate.

Whatever government's compulsions, it was a betrayal of the Lok Sabha resolution. That was because the dynamics of electoral politics took over when the bill was not going through in the Rajya Sabha, each party calculating how many seats it would get in Punjab, UP, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur.

There is a lesson for those who have put their faith in people's politics. I do not want to indulge in the I-told-you-so argument. Yet I recall the warning I gave on suspending the agitation. My fear, justified now, was that the momentum of demonstrations would be difficult to rebuild once stalled. Today the impression that has gone around is that those leading the movement are whimsical, switching it off and on too often.

Now that the strategy is being reworked, it would be counter productive to clutter people's mind with too many details on the weaknesses of the bill. Let the movement concentrate on one point: Independence of the CBI. The agency cannot be under the government which uses it as a political instrument. Cases have been followed, dropped or kept in abeyance, depending on the support the government needed from a political party at a particular time. The Manmohan Singh coalition is not alone to blame. It was the same story when Atal Behari Vajpayee of BJP was the prime minister or Narasimha Rao of Congress.

The weakening of the movement has once again thrown up the same old question: Should people's movements continue to stay away from participating in elections? So far they have kept themselves out. Some argue that the gamut of polls is so much ridden by money and caste that the people's movements would have to make compromises if they propose to contest.

Yet in a democratic polity, there is no running away from elections. The state assemblies and parliament are manned by the representatives of people who choose them through

the ballot box. Representatives are the arbiters. Should the pressure on them be from outside with uncertain or limited results or should 'we the people,' as the Constitution's preamble says, give the country an alternative which would be from the grassroots. Both the Congress and the BJP, the two main parties for the last three decades, have failed the people. Their agenda is power which for them is the end by itself.

Gandhian Jayaprakash Narayan who successfully ousted the Indira Gandhi government, had constituted the Janata Party which won a majority in the Lok Sabha. He too had first confined himself to the agitation alone. He met the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to beseech her to deal with corruption and the use of large sums of money in elections. She said that her party had no money and that it was fighting against corruption ruthlessly. The Congress has taken more or less the same line today.

The only difference is that the Manmohan Singh government has brought to parliament an apology of bill to show that it was committed to deal with corruption and got it through the Lok Sabha. Anna and his team can tear a leaf from the book of the communists. They had to take the way of electoral politics even when their ideology dictated them to revolt against the bourgeois system which was based on the principle of elections. In fact, they are caught in a comical situation: They preach communism which believes in dictatorship but participate in elections which follow the dictates of democracy, an anti-thesis of dictatorship. This is the reason why their influence is limited. It will remain so until they shed their doctrinaire approach. To expand

their base, the Left has to adopt a democratic, liberal stand that attracts civil society. The Left enjoyed that position till partition and lost its way after that.

Mahatma Gandhi fought against the British through electoral system, however weak and limited. And he had to have the Congress as an instrument to push the freedom struggle. He was not its member because he wanted to build man so that he or she would rise above personal gain for the good of society. He failed but won independence.

Anna may not be a Mahatma Gandhi or a Jayaprakash Narayan. But Anna has come to represent people's resentment against corruption and all that they suffer in their daily life. He does not have to go after one party. He transcends parties and parochial politics. He is pursuing an ideal which should remain unsullied because that is an ideal. All NGOs should help his movement, however impossible some of his team members. A failure of people's movement is the failure of the principle of peaceful protest against mis-governance or non-governance. The nation cannot afford to lose.

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on
Mumbai Bank
in favour of
JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai 400 007

A Year of Changes

S. Viswam

The year that we have just rung out was a politically turbulent one. The non-Congress parties ganged up against the UPA. The UPA saw itself under siege with Team Anna breathing down its neck on the one side and its partners needling it, often without rhyme or reason, on the other. The UPA Two came near collapse on occasions unable to withstand multi-point pressure but is living to tell its tale and make fresh promises about improved governance. However, the year ahead may turn out to be politically even more turbulent given that numerous political changes are on the anvil, and the UPA remains weak and vulnerable.

Team Anna, and Anna himself are likely to contribute their bit to the political upheaval that is on the cards, thanks to their intention of politicising the Lokpal issue even further by campaigning against the Congress in the assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Goa and Manipur. By singling out the Congress as the most guilty party among the political class, Anna and his associates have already lost their non-partisan representative character. Despite denials, there is enough material to confirm the Anna-BJP-RSS nexus. Team Anna has targeted the Congress and the UPA exclusively for the non-passage of the Lokpal Bill, unmindful of the fact that the blame has to be shared by all parties represented in Parliament. Team Anna has no grievance at all against the BJP which changed political colours more frequently inside and outside Parliament than does a chameleon. Team Anna is now acting as a pawn in the BJP

and anti-Congress lobbies, witness the behaviour of Anna-loyalists waving black flags against the Prime Minister who was in Amritsar on a personal visit to offer prayers at Harmandir Saheb. Individual members of Team Anna, barring just a few exemptions, have developed a swollen head, and behave as repositories of all wisdom and have no hesitation in running down those criticizing them. Consistently during the anti-corruption campaign they have displayed fascist tendencies. They are not amenable to reason, but we will be failing in our duty if we do not point out their present strategy and tactics will prove counter-productive in the long run. The political class will have no use for Team Anna once the assembly polls are over.

The coming elections are likely to be bitterly contested as all the major parties have a stake in them in the context of the next round of parliamentary polls in 2014 and the presidential election a few months hence. Even if an assault by a combination of parties on Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party fails to deliver a mortal blow on her dispensation in UP, certain changes can be foretold. For one thing, Mayawati's majority in the assembly can be expected to suffer even while the SP and the Congress hope to increase their present tallies. The BJP has had a unremarkable run in UP, but if the Congress-SP combine threatens her, the BJP can be expected to go to Mayawati's aid, either by way of support from outside or a partnership in a coalition. The outcome will be most crucial, however, for a party

that has been written off, namely the Congress. Now, thanks to Rahul Gandhi's committed involvement in the pre-election campaign, the party's hopes have risen but more important, his own ambitions in New Delhi seem tied up to the result. Put simply, a good showing by the Congress - a really good showing, not an accretion of five or ten seats - will smoothen Rahul's way to the top post, in succession to Manmohan Singh, whose exit is already speculated upon in Delhi's power corridors. As things stand, and unless the Congress performs more blunders in the next few months, the UPA can be in the saddle till March 2014. The BJP has been spearheading a campaign to oust the UPA mid-term with little success so far. The UPA's current vulnerability springs from its declining ties with its two allies, the Trinamool and the DMK. If these two parties take their anti-Congressism to the logical conclusion, the UPA will have to undertake a massive man-hunt for supporters and be ready to pay a price when parties and individual MPs put their pound of flesh on the trading table.

Whether it turns out to be a happy one or a stormy one, 2012 will certainly be a politically fascinating year. The status quo will change in five states to begin with and point to the likely twists and turns in the run-up to the 2014 poll. Rashtrapati Bhavan may have a new occupant in case Sonia Gandhi wants to jettison Pratibha Patil by the wayside and install a new yes-man or yes-woman! We live in extraordinarily interesting times!!

The saga of the Lokpal Bill

Prashant Bhushan

The drama in the Rajya Sabha showed that the UPA government was not willing to go even by the will of Parliament. This gives rise to fundamental questions about the functioning of Indian democracy.

The year 2011 will be remembered in India as the year of the campaign against corruption and for the Jan Lokpal Bill. The campaign began in January 2011 in the backdrop of the publicity that accompanied the several mega-scams that surfaced in 2010, notably those relating to the Commonwealth Games and the telecom spectrum allocations. It caught the public imagination with Anna Hazare's fast at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi in April 2011. That forced the UPA government to constitute a joint drafting committee for a Lokpal bill. The civil society representatives in the committee proposed a bill called the Jan Lokpal bill, which became the basis for discussions. The basic principles on which the bill was drafted were culled from the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which required all countries to put in place anti-corruption investigative agencies that would be independent of the executive government and would have the jurisdiction to investigate all public servants for corruption.

The Jan Lokpal Bill thus provided for the selection of a 11-member Lokpal by a broad-based selection committee (comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, two judges selected by all the judges of the Supreme Court, the Comptroller and Auditor General,

the Chief Election Commissioner, the Central Vigilance Commissioner and the previous three chairpersons of the Lokpal), through a transparent process.

It sought to bring the anti-corruption wing of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) under the Lokpal's administrative control. The Lokpal was to be given corruption investigative jurisdiction over all public servants (including Members of Parliament, judges and all sections of the bureaucracy), and those who may have abetted their acts of corruption (including corporations or non-governmental organisations). The Lokpal could recommend the removal of those officials who were charge sheeted for corruption and order the freezing of any assets that seemed to be acquired by corrupt means.

The Bill sought to provide that corruption trials would be put on the fast track and the courts would determine the loss caused to the public exchequer by an act of corruption — which would be recovered from the corrupt public servants and their abettors. It provided for citizens' charters to be framed by all public authorities, which would provide for time-bound delivery of public services; failure to do so would be actionable at the hands of officers working under the Lokpal. The bill required States to have Lokayuktas (covering State government officials) on the same lines as the Lokpal.

In order to ensure the integrity of the Lokpal institution, several layers

of accountability were sought to be built into its working. Its functioning was made totally transparent by means of a requirement to put every detail of its investigations on a public website after the completion of investigations. The CAG was required to do an annual financial and performance audit of the functioning of the entire Lokpal institution. Any citizen could make a complaint against any member of the Lokpal to the Supreme Court, which had the power to order his or her suspension and even removal.

In addition, there were other important, anti-corruption provisions in the Jan Lokpal Bill. It required every public authority to give out contracts, leases and licences with total transparency and by public auction, unless such procedures were stated to be impossible to undertake. Public servants were barred from taking up jobs with those organisations or companies with which they had been dealing in their official capacity. This was meant to prevent an insidious form of corruption whereby public officials would take jobs instead of bribes from the organisations that they had been patronising in their official capacity.

After nine meetings, the government terminated its engagement with the civil society members of the joint drafting committee and went on to draft and table its own Bill in the monsoon session of Parliament. This Bill incorporated some of the provisions of the Jan Lokpal Bill but fell far short of what was required to

even set up an independent and comprehensive anti-corruption investigative organisation. It left the selection of the Lokpal to a government-dominated committee. Though powers for the removal of Lokpal members were vested in the Supreme Court, complaints against the Lokpal could only be made by the government, which retained the power to suspend them.

The government's Bill removed most public servants from the jurisdiction of the Lokpal, including the Prime Minister, MPs (insofar as their corruption pertained to their actions in Parliament), judges, and Class 2, 3 and 4 officers. Instead, it brought lakhs of NGOs (even those which were not funded by the government) within its jurisdiction.

Though the Bill kept the CBI with the government, it allowed the Lokpal to have its own anti-corruption investigative body. It eliminated the need to get prior sanction for investigation from the government. It provided for the confiscation of the assets of corrupt public servants and the recovery of losses caused by their acts of corruption from them. But it created a terribly cumbersome procedure for investigation, by which a preliminary inquiry and hearing of the corrupt public servant were made compulsory before investigation could begin. This ended the possibility of making surprise raids and seizures on the premises of corrupt public servants or their abettors.

Anna Hazare announced his second round of fasting in protest against this Bill, from August 16. This brought lakhs of people on to the streets across the country, and eventually forced the government

to convene a special session of Parliament, where Anna's three minimal demands were accepted by a unanimous Sense of the House resolution. Thus, all government servants and the citizens' charter were to be brought under the Lokpal's jurisdiction. The Bill would provide for Lokayuktas in the States on the same model as the Lokpal. The government promised to bring forward and pass such a strengthened bill in the winter session of Parliament.

Thereafter, the Bill was referred to the Standing Committee of Parliament, which after three months gave a fractured report with many dissenting notes. The Bill, which was reintroduced towards the end of the winter session, not only did not accept the one useful suggestion of the Standing Committee (negating the compulsory step of a preliminary enquiry) but went on to eliminate even the investigative body from the Lokpal. Thus, the Lokpal would not only be selected and suspended by the government, it would also have to rely only on government-controlled investigative organisations for its investigation. Class 3 and 4 officers were still kept out of the Lokpal's ambit.

Those of us who worked on the mission with Anna Hazare had suggested 34 amendments to rectify the government's Bill, and we pointed out that four of these were critical to making the Lokpal a workable institution. These were that the selection and removal procedure should be made independent of the government; the CBI should be brought under the Lokpal's administrative control or, alternatively, the Lokpal should have its own investigative body; all government servants should

be brought under the Lokpal's investigative ambit; and the procedure for investigation should be in line with the normal criminal investigation procedure. But the government was adamant in not accepting any of these either, and went on to bulldoze the passage of its Bill. It rejected all the amendments moved by the Opposition. The Opposition moved several of the amendments suggested by us, but the only amendment that the government accepted was one to allow State governments to decide when the Bill would be applied to them.

The Rajya Sabha witnessed a sordid drama. Several parties which had walked out in the Lok Sabha (the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party) or had not moved any amendments there (the Trinamool Congress) moved amendments in the Rajya Sabha and their representatives delivered fiery speeches opposing the provisions of the Bill. When it became clear that at least three of the amendments (those relating to the selection and removal of Lokpal members, the CBI being brought under the administrative control of the Lokpal, and the deletion of the chapter on Lokayuktas in the States) were likely to be passed, the government engineered disturbances in the House, resorted to filibustering and prevented the amendments from being voted upon. And the House was prorogued with the Bill hanging in the air.

The government was repeatedly telling us that by proceeding with protests while Parliament was considering the Bill, we were showing contempt for parliamentary democracy. We had responded by pointing out that by overlooking the

(Continued on Page 9)

Yes, Parliament is Supreme!

D. K. Giri

The current cacophony on the supremacy of the Parliament created by a section of Parliamentarians and some political commentators is really not called for. In a Parliamentary democracy it is stating the obvious. No one in his/her sane mind could suggest otherwise in the present system of governance. There have been failed attempts in the past to introduce presidential form of governance in the system, like Vasant Sathe in 1980s; and now the Congress MP Sashi Tharoor is rekindling this fertile debate. But, as the socialist veteran late Madhu Dandavate said, "Parliamentary form of democracy is rooted in the social soil of India, hence there is no need to think of any other option". Then why is this desperate and unnecessary assertion of the supremacy of the Parliament! It is clear that the panic button was pressed as the support for Anna Hazare grew across the country.

There are surprising and apologetic claims made by the parliamentarians and even journalists that parliament is supreme. Media, especially the TV has been full of debates on the sovereign supremacy of the parliament. One finds that it is a futile intellectual exercise prompted by either inadequate understanding of respective roles of the major institutions of our democracy or reluctance to engage with the rising civil society. Can any informed person deny the rise and role of the civil society? Even in communist China where any form of protest is banned, there were 90,000 civil society protest movements last year. It is another matter that these are not reported due to censorship in China.

What is Civil Society?

It is in the fitness of things that we understand the civil society - its role, boundary, accountability and so on - before we examine if it is affecting the supremacy of the parliament or the latter is continuously making self-goals. I have written in this journal before on the dynamics between the state, market and the civil society. For the present context, let us recall that there is no universal standard definition of civil society. But the most acceptable one is, "the civil society is an arena outside of the family, the state, and the market where people associate to advance common interests". The other important aspect in recognition of the civil society is that state, market and civil society constitute the entirety of the society in any country. The civil society comprises various social institutions and provides the space for contestation of different ideas and values. It has close interactive relations with government and market. It is the bulwark against the authority or rather authoritarianism of the state and rapacity of the market. The relationship between the state and the civil society is dynamic in that it takes different forms. Before we discuss these forms of relation we ought to examine why has civil society in India become restless, active and 'aggressive' in recent times, epitomised by Anna Hazare and his platform, India Against Corruption. Once Lloyd Rudolph, a noted Indologist commented in a seminar that "activism of judiciary and even president of India shows the growth and maturity of Indian Democracy", but he agreed with me when I countered his perspective by

saying that the activism of judiciary and the titular head, the president, also denotes the decline in efficiency of the parliament.

Decline of Indian Parliament

Winston Churchill once commented on functioning of the British Parliament in his own inimitable way, "There have been few occasions when the Parliament has risen to the level of its mediocrity". One wished the same could be said about the Indian Parliament even in a sarcastic way. Disruption, not discussion, has been the order of the day. The entire winter session last year was washed away over the 2G spectrum scam issue. The Opposition continued to disrupt the session on their demand for a JPC and the Government would not relent. There was stalemate and the government finally gave in. Why did the Opposition not discuss the desirability of instituting a JPC and why did the Government not agree to it until the whole session was wasted? Then the monsoon session from 23rd August to 8th September, 2011 was again one of the most turbulent sessions. Both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha saw frequent disruptions with half of the 26 sittings getting paralysed. In the last session just concluded, when the Lokpl Bill was being moved in the Rajya Sabha, a RJD member, Rajniti Prasad disgraced himself by tearing up the Bill from the Minister's hands. Anyone watching the sessions on TV will be ashamed to see how these honourable members behave. Unruly behaviour and chaotic scenes in the Parliament are too common a sight to miss.

There is definite decline of institutional politics including that of the Parliament, decrease in the legitimacy of political process as Parliament fails to function effectively. The judiciary has taken over even the civil cases entertaining the PILs and taking cognisance of governance failure. Behaviour of the Parliamentarians during the debates leaves a lot to desire. In addition to the inefficiency and indecency, there is another important issue that is accountability in a democracy of all institutions including the civil society. There is also an attitudinal issue which has serious practical implications. When they say an MP or a Minister is greater than any other, that is an ego-statement; also an MP becomes superior, gets privileged treatment. People spend tons of resources and energy to somehow get elected, and after the election, they try to recover what they spent. That leads to corruption, and checking it by MPs then becomes an untenable proposition. That is why the Lokpal Bill was gathering dust for over 40 years. No one said any body other than the Parliament can legislate or make laws, not even Anna Hazare nor his team said that. Yes, the Parliament is supreme in making law, but the MPs cannot behave as political supremos, they will have to listen to the people, their electorate; they cannot take the society and the country for granted once they are elected. Usually, they do not consult the people until next election. This is no representation. As a commentator said, 'Indian politics is electionised, not democratised'. Unless the Members of Parliament evolve some mechanism constitutionally or otherwise, there will be more Ana Hazares to put pressure, and even demand their recall and resignations. Parliament has to rise to the occasion

to respond to people's aspirations and demands. One Minister privately told one that he is so wary of putting the badge on his car as an MP or minister for fear of being heckled in public. One would think that MPs will be conscious of their positions, proximity with the people, responsibilities, and behave better, so that no one challenges their 'supremacy' in making law.

Civil society and Government

The civil society can have three different forms of relationship with the government. One is to support or supplement the government. This type happens in the developmental functions, where civil society organisations known, popularly, as NGOs, a generic term, implement the development projects on behalf of the government. The second form is of supplanting the government in delivering services. In this model, government is handing over the services like hospitals and educational institutions to the NGOs for improving their delivery. It is now universally realised that government, beset with bureaucracies, and markets pulled by profit cannot deliver services that call for a compassionate approach along with profit and efficiency. Hence many countries are looking at the civil society organisations (CSOs) as another source or agency for service delivery. The third one is bit controversial as it is a confrontational relation. When human rights are violated, people are displaced, corruption hits justice and fairness, CSOs rise to fight the government and try to put pressure. This is the type represented by Ana Hazare. Government has to recognise and accept this role of civil society, admit its mistakes and lapses, and dialogue with the civil society in a true democratic spirit

and transparent manner to assuage their feelings and accommodate their suggestions. This did not happen in the dialogue on Lokpal Bill. The government blew hot and cold and was inconsistent, and later, made it an issue between the Parliament and the civil society, even questioned the legitimacy of the latter. This was unfortunate and uncalled for.

The Writing on the Wall

The writing on the wall is clear. The inefficiency of the Parliament has been responsible for the frustration and anger of the Civil Society and the stand it is forced to take against the government. Parliament is supreme inasmuch as it has the constitutional authority and responsibility to make laws. But it has to listen to the people not only during elections but at all times, as people are sovereign. If people's voice is not heard and accommodated, there will be soon a constitutional necessity to involve the people constituency-wise through referendums to make laws in the country. In order to avoid this lengthy process of lawmaking, the MPs have to find mechanisms to interact more with the people. They have to have more constituency offices what are in the West called surgeries to receive grievances from the people. Dialogue with the larger civil society needs to be structured and done more often, so that the confrontation leads to co-operation. Disruptions in the Parliament have to stop; or the civil society will rise again. They cannot bear the wastage of huge amounts of money spent in running the Parliament and maintaining MPs. One knows, politicians try to, in a sinister way, muzzle the civil society voice, but thanks to Anna Hazare - he had the courage and stature to stand up for common people to pressurise the politicians.

Why the lokpal bill could not become a law

Parasnath Chaudhary

Once again, the Indian nation has been cheated. Its political class has refused to set up an effective anti-graft authority. Their refusal to do so is not difficult to explain, with Lokpal in function, they would not be able to binge on the state exchequer. They would be deprived of the pomp and circumstance that attends the present politics. They would have to conduct themselves with restraint and dignity and live a lawful life. Checked, they would feel miserable.

Long used to a life of illegality and comforts, they are scared of being under watch for their misconduct. They would go to any extent to foil a move that seeks to put them under any restraint. They just cling to the idea of being corrupt and above law.

Viewed against this background, the Anna anti-graft movement is past their endurance. They see it as a tendency that needs to be nipped in the bud. The Lokpal bill they are debating is just their trick for hiding the truth. They would resort to filibustering, circumlocution and chopping of logic to scupper the Lokpal bill. They would make any idea of putting a check on corruption look a grand nonsense. They would have the cheek to describe sleaze as a global phenomenon. They even have the audacity to call corruption a lubricant that drives the machine of development faster. When speaking about the Lokpal bill in parliament, they betrayed their designs. They were garbling the garbage. They knew they would not allow the bill to be passed.

Skilled in the art of mendacious propaganda, they got their stuff spindoctored as their sincerest declarations against corruption. Despite being amenable to legislation and in accord with law Lokpal got rubbished as an interference with the functioning of parliamentary democracy.

There were copious references to procedures, legal and constitutional niceties involved in the act of passing the bill. By the same token, they begin invoking the intricate principles of international law when they are asked to bring home the Indian black money parked in foreign banks.

In short, they are happy with the way they are doing things and no power on this planet can deflect them from their chosen course. Democracy is fine as long as it does them no harm. When inconvenient, democracy is balderdash. When told, this could leave the people no choice but to take to violence to set things right, their stock answer is -India is a land of Gandhi armed with inexhaustible patience.

Their stand seems wholly untenable as the Anna protest has created a new awareness in the country and seriously dented the legitimacy of the power they cling to. Credibility of politicians is at rock bottom. For the first time, there has surfaced a yawning gap between them and the people of India.

The ordinary Indians are talking in idioms the political class is not

able to grasp. While the former have begun redefining concepts such as democracy, parliament and sovereignty the latter still uses them as absolute categories. While the ruling class sees the five year term as inviolable, the people on the street think otherwise. Lohia's formulation that a live community does not wait for five years has of late gained enormous popular appeal. There is an outcry for a democracy that creatively responds to the new challenges.

The Indian National Congress led by Sonia Gandhi being the most determined part of the political class and up to its neck in scams and corruption is not willing to start a new politics. It pathologically desires to stay put. On purpose, it bungles the Lokpal draft and conspires to create such unruly scenes in Rajya Sabha as could barely allow the bill to be passed. This is the Congress way of nibbling away at democracy.

The other constituents of the political class are no less at fault. All of them are busy feathering their nests. To them, politics is just a method of getting rich and powerful. The corrupt familial corporations are masquerading as political parties.

The Anna protest is a refreshing idea. It has mobilised the nation on the issue of corruption. It has shown that if mobilised the crowd on the street could restrain the wild political class.

What, however, is lacking is the

absence of a convincing alternative to the political establishment. The people at large are confused. They

do not know how to express their disapproval. There is a saying that every cloud has a silver lining. The

current rot can not go on for keeps. A new consciousness sweeping the nation is a glimmer of hope.

Let us not lose sight of the main objective

Pannalal Surana

A sad episode has come to an end. Anna Hazare has been agitating for long to fight corruption. In Maharashtra, he could get some of the corrupt ministers ousted from the seats of power. He could also get vigilance committees appointed at tehsil and district levels to oversee the function of the department of civil supplies. A few rackets in the distribution of kerosene – the oil is a necessary requirement of poor households in semi-urban areas – were busted, the culprits booked and its supply got regularized, at least for the time being. People started looking at Anna as an icon of cleaner administration that touches their lives.

He was also instrumental in getting the Right to Information Act passed by the Parliament. Many activists are using it to expose misdeeds of some of the high and mighty people.

And then the Lokpal episode started. I am not sure, but it seems some persons engaged in some social activities at Delhi felt that the post of Lokpal would be the most effective instrument in controlling corruption. It may be ‘India Against Corruption’ or some such body who might have pleaded with Anna to take lead in pursuing that issue at the national level. Anna somehow agreed to it and then the whole sequence of events started which came to a sad end on 29th December, when Rajya

Sabha adjourned without passing the Lokpal Bill as adopted by the Lok Sabha two days earlier. In the meanwhile, Anna had to end his fast earlier than scheduled and also call off the jail bharo agitation. It did cause heart-burning in the small group of sincere activists. A mutual mud-slinging game is going on amongst some of the mainstream political parties. Anna is receiving some flak. Well it may be taken as part of the game. Let us hope he would also ruminate and realize some of the mistakes he committed in his zeal to achieve something spectacular and that also quickly.

Let us try to focus our attention and energy on the main point. Lokpal may or may not be the most effective instrument in curbing corruption at the Central government level. But, as has been mentioned by somebody, some one-time mighty persons like A Raja and Suresh Kalmadi are languishing in jail even without Lokpal being in place. There are some good old laws which can be made use of for bringing to book those guilty of high and blatant corruption. Some persons should devote enough time and energy for that. However, let us not forget that that it is the corruption at the level of patwari or tehsildar office or development block or at the branch of nationalized or cooperative banks that pinches in the poor man’s shoe. Efforts must be made to eradicate or minimise the level of corruption at

that level. It is not a one-time task but is to be attended in each and every case.

(Continued from Page 5)

wishes of the people as expressed in numerous polls, surveys and referendums, all of which showed that more than 80 per cent of the people favoured the Jan Lokpal Bill, the government was showing contempt for the people. The drama in the Rajya Sabha showed that the government was not even willing to go by the will of Parliament. This gives rise to fundamental questions about the functioning of Indian democracy. Is this form of representative democracy allowing the will of the people to be reflected in policy and law-making, or is it being held hostage to parties and their leaderships to be determined by their own whims or corrupt considerations? Has the time come for us to rethink and deepen our democracy by putting in place systems where laws and policies would be decided by decisive inputs of the people (through referendums and gaon sabhas, or village councils) rather than only by such “elected representatives”? We hope that this fundamental issue would bring about an even broader public engagement than what has been witnessed during this Lokpal campaign.

—Courtesy The Hindu, 2-01-2012

2011 was the year of the activist

Brij Khandelwal

"Whatever the shape and size of the political parties constituting the ruling elite, democracy looks firmer and rejuvenated as India steps into 2012. For sure, the year 2011 will go down in history as the year of the activist, not just in our country but even beyond," says political commentator Paras Nath Choudhary (retired analyst of the South Asia Institute of the Heidelberg University).

Indeed, the activist in India has woken up and he seems equally distanced from all political parties which he feels have not delivered. His disenchantment from the kind of politics being practised over the years will trigger creative movements and promote new icons in 2012, according to national theatre personality Jitendra Raghvanshi.

In 2011, the activist's chief weapons were the internet platforms, the mobile connectivity, judicial institutions and of course the mass media which consciously and collectively empowered the Aam Aadmi, subtly widening the great communication divide with the political dispensation.

The Right to Information helped sharpen the focus of debates with useful and at times explosive inputs of information, adds Naresh Paras, secretary of Agra RTI Forum.

A look at the interactive social media platforms would be enough to give an idea how opinion making and sharing has acquired pro-aam admi bias. "Definitely the media monopoly has been dented to some extent. Citizen journalism is now the established trend and as the internet penetration increases with better and affordable technology, we should be seeing a more vibrant democratic culture," says cyber journalist Piyush Pandey.

An aspiring young Congress candidate from Agra North assembly seat Sumit Gupta Bibhav adds

"Facebook is a reality. They, the facebook crowd may not go out and vote, but they surely have the power to spoil the party, change public perceptions and help image building." Younger politicians are flocking to Facebook with their fan pages and seeking support.

The catalyst in 2011 was the Anna Hazare movement which shook the very foundation of a non-responsive rigid political system that thrived because of the lack of interest and involvement of the masses. A well oiled and tested system of patronage down the line ensured that the gains of democracy remained confined to the same set of people or families, year after year. But it did not take long for the juggernaut to be shaken from deep slumber. "One Anna movement, widely perceived as a moral crusade, like the Jayaprakash Narayan-led students' movement in the early 1970s, was enough to wake up the political class which today looks lost and utterly confused," adds Paras Nath Choudhary.

The most positive fallout of the Jan Lok Pal Bill has been the evolution of the "civil society" in every city of India. "Amorphous, often at cross-roads, marked by diversity of views, these citizens groups' have emerged

as pressure groups of sorts and will play an important part in days to come. Politicians' actions are being closely watched and monitored and with the Whistle Blower provision available, the corrupt may not have such a smooth sailing in 2012," feels senior advocate of Agra, K C Jain.

The coming elections for state assemblies could throw up interesting and unexpected results as millions of new voters have been enrolled. "The young first-time voters could tilt the apple cart in any direction. The Election Commission guidelines and strict monitoring as also staggered election process, could change the scenario fundamentally. Media manipulation has already become difficult with alternative fora of communication gaining popularity," adds political analyst Shravan Kumar Singh in Agra.

A senior bureaucrat in Agra shared his disgust with the changing public mood "every time we hold a meeting in the rural areas or at the block headquarters, some one or the other gets up and starts questioning and raising objections. They all want to be heard. Many are well informed and conscious of their rights. In the city almost every day we have faced agitations and protests, offices are flooded with RTI queries."

So watch out for the activist in 2012.

It has been reported in the Mathrubhumi of 30 December, 2011 that the present Chief Secretary to the Government of Kerala, who is due to retire only in March, 2012, is being appointed as an adviser to the GoK to favour one K Mohandas, presently Secretary to the Government of India and due to retire in February, 2012. It is the height of arrogance and nepotism to misuse public office like this when the tax payers' money is being wasted as if it is from the personal property of the decision makers.

How the appointment of K Mohandas as Chief Secretary to the Government of Kerala is going to benefit the citizens of Kerala and how the purpose would not have been served by the current incumbent?

What are the special qualifications of the present Chief Secretary that qualifies him to be appointed as an adviser and the issues on which his advice is being sought, as well as what is the duration of his appointment in that position?

– P M Ravindran

Environment and Human Welfare

Ishwari Prasad

Environment includes earth, water and air along with living and non-living beings found on this, our planet, earth. There are two aspects relevant in this context, to understand as to why environment has become so serious a concern in recent decades. First, it is believed that human beings are in existence for the last 40,000 years on the earth. During this period they have moved from agricultural civilization to industrial and thereafter to knowledge civilization. Each of these civilizational movements has increasingly encroached upon the ecological sphere of this planet. Second, our planet is covered 70 percent by water and 20 percent by ice, desert and steep mountains. This, in other words, means that there is very little; only 10 percent, left to support the rapidly growing human population. The pressure of human population is disturbing the natural system and thereby responsible for the disappearance of many wild plants and animals.

Previously, the environmental or ecological courses did not attract the attention of economics because the problems like ecological disorder, atmospheric pollution, population explosion, acid rain and global warming were not in recognizable existence. However, it is apparent that the life supporting systems - earth, water, air - as well as living and non-living beings are interrelated and inter-dependent. We should be aware that our good earth has been supporting some five million species of plants, animals, including humans, and micro organisms that form a vast

network of inter-related environment systems for survival. All these together are called eco-system. This system, if not disrupted, is a natural environmental system and maintains balance among the species on the earth. But in modern times, this balance is being increasingly disturbed because human beings have made significant changes in the natural order of the environmental system of this planet.

Since the changes in the order of elements of environment and in the proportion of population of species have made a noticeable chain reaction in other elements of this ecosystem, the contemporary world is being severally affected by them. Human activities particularly after the Industrial Revolution have assumed enormous dimension the result that the life supporting ecological system is crumbling. Hence, the disturbances generated by human activities are so much that the nature is facing difficulty in sustaining its balance. This, in turn has resulted in severe pollution and ecological imbalance.

Only recently environment has been able to make a place for itself in economics. The Club of Rome had warned in 1972 about the impending danger of ecological imbalance, if the reckless use of natural resources and the single-minded pursuit of economic growth were not checked. Moreover, the priority of economic growth had diverted the attention of policy makers and scholars away from the concern over environment. Now, it is seriously realized that the

gift of nature is not unlimited and the nature can not remain always kind. The balance between man and nature cannot to be taken for granted under all circumstances.

The environmental problems, in fact, are human problems. They begin with people as the cause and end with the people as victims. Essentially, human beings have created bad environment and bad environment, in turn, has caused disasters on the earth. However, in economics the element of environment had not been taken in the main body of analysis. Now, it has become essential in the course of prescribing the process of growth. In short the concern for environment in economics is of recent origin. Of late it has become so much important that the contemporary discussion on economics would be incomplete if it does not diagnose the elements of environment affecting the process of economic movement. But previously it was deliberately ignored. The entire period of neo-classical economics tried its best to make economics a science almost entirely on the lines of Newtonian principles. In spite of various criticisms and challenges, this school of thought dominated economic thinking the world over. In this system, the economic process of society moves between production and consumption without any hindrance from the side of the nature. It is considered that the movement of economy is self-contained in the sense that it neither creates any problem nor gets affected by any change in the environment in which the economic system

operates. The Keynesian revolution made a big bang in economics. It prescribed a new way to manage the economy but did not accommodate the role of environment. Its concepts of influencing national income, investment character and international interaction have no concern about the environment though it is so vital in influencing the life pattern on this earth. The economics of Marx worked on class struggle. It did not correlate the role of natural resources in constructing the economy of society. Though he visualised the economic process in a historical context, he did not integrate the natural phenomenon in his main analysis of development. Marx speaks of labour, which is a process between man and nature, he considers that human beings, through their effort and actions, regulation and control, are capable of establishing good relation between himself and nature.

Since labour works on the objects provided by nature as free gift. Marxian analysis does not establish a natural relationship between economy and environment. But in recent years, it is being realized that environment limits not only the growth of an economy but it risks the entire life system on this earth. It is seriously felt that all living beings of the planet exert some pressure on the natural environment and human beings are capable of distorting it severely.

In this context, two main factors can be identified as responsible for disturbing the balance between man and nature. These are: modern technology and lust for consumerism. There are people who think that over-population is the villain of environmental pressure and argue that by mid-century the population

of the world would reach 9 to 10 billion. They fear that Malthus would reappear with all natural calamities in tow. But mere size is not important; its impacts are felt through other sources also.

In primitive times man had invented the simplest kind of tools to be used in the system of production. Gradually, he has invented sophisticated tools and machines. The improvements in science and technology have done immense good to mankind by enhancing man's capacity as producers. Technological advancement has given enormous power to mankind to produce more and interfere with the nature.

There is a popular opinion that we are moving towards a post-industrial society. In fact, it is said that the mankind has moved from agricultural civilization to industrial civilization and again from industrial to knowledge civilization. In this technologies have to play a dominant role. Though technological innovation and its use in industry, has immensely benefited mankind, it has not been without its cost. Industrialism has created a lot of problems. Modern technology has helped man in production and in labour conservation. Modern economic growth, based on industrialism, has created urbanization and inequality. The growth of cities has created a very unhealthy environment. It has given rise to slums and pollution of various types. Mankind is facing water, air and noise pollution. By continuing in this manner man can completely isolate himself from nature. And if this happens, it would lead us to dooms day. Technology is responsible for concentrating on the maximum growth path ignoring distribution. But the economists

concerned with the welfare of people are of the opinion that economic growth must proceed along with improving continuously the distribution of income in favour of the poor. The economic growth of an economy must create opportunity access to basic health and education for everyone in society. The absence of this approach has also endangered our environment. Maurice Strong, Secretary General of the U.N. conference on Human Environment at Stockholm observed; "If the aim of human endeavour is to increase welfare and not merely to increase the Gross National Product, our environmental problems must be an integral part of the development strategy". We must always remember that technology has simply provided us an opportunity to live comfortably on our children's natural inheritance rather than help us to live with nature more harmoniously.

Consumerist culture is the worst enemy of environment on this earth. We must realize that man is not the centre of the universe, rather he is a part of nature. The core of western civilization is to continuously raise the level of consumption for acquiring greater happiness. And this has been made possible with the system of income inequality and high volume of production in farm and factory. But this is fallacious. It is endowed with heavy cost to society and to the nature. The Hedonistic philosophy of acquiring happiness through consumerism leads to degradation of environment. The key strategy towards ecologically sustainable society is a simple life with low level of consumption.

The modern civilization has created throughout the world a mad rush for more and more

consumption. Since this is being initiated throughout the world, it is becoming obvious that this one of the most dangerous paths to disturb the balance of ecology on this earth. At the moment, the rich nations, and the rich people of the third world countries, are consuming much more than is required for a normal human existence. Since nature has enough to meet the basic needs of mankind but is unable to fulfill their greed, environment has to collapse. And all countries have to follow this warning. A scholar like Lynsey Hanley is of the opinion: "What prevents the world being fed equitably and healthily is the fact that rich world governments can not bear the thought of doing two unpopular things. First, they won't encourage individuals to reduce their own consumption and second, they won't facilitate moving that consumption away from other adoptive 'necessities' of the world middle class". The ecological system can not tolerate an economic system in which improvement of the environment will have no meaning if two thirds of the human race suffers from mal-nutrition due to under-consumption while less than one third suffer from obesity and diseases due to over-consumption. For a balance of ecosystem mankind must adopt production by masses rather than mass production. We must adopt appropriate technology in production of basic necessities in consumption.

The most important problem before mankind is to make this planet a decent place to survive not only for human beings but also for all the species on this earth. It is, therefore, necessary that the environment should be retained in such a manner that it remains always congenial for all living beings. For mankind, it has

special significance because it has achieved a high level of civilization. If the harmony between man and nature is disturbed, not only the civilization will collapse but the whole life system will be ruined. Such a balance can be maintained only if the scientific advancement is not aimed at achieving a successive victory over nature. Such an ambition of achieving the control over nature is wrong and destructive. Human civilization has been built through the millennium with the help of foresight and wisdom for the wellbeing of mankind. We have to develop a sense of responsibility and an alertness of the danger of unbridled expansion of science. Since the technology follows scientific development, we have to be careful in its application in the economy through production and consumption. Armed conflicts also have a big role in the development of science. In such a situation, our statesmen and scientists have special responsibilities. Mahatma Gandhi had advocated 100 years ago that the unwise use of machine and human greed would ruin the human civilization. In this context, the scientists have been criticised because their main concern up till now has been the requirement of industries as desired by the capitalists or the politicians rather than the urge for the well being of mankind in general.

Moreover, there are limits to economic growth. It harms human civilization when we ignore the law of nature and go on to produce goods and services in abundance for comforts and luxuries which damage the environment and make harmful impacts on life. It is our everyday experience that those who live in natural surrounding are healthier than those living in

cities and shuggies because the nature fails to provide them the essential ingredients for healthy life. Mahatma Gandhi was right in saying that nature has provided enough for the basic requirements of mankind but not for their greed.

Recently, there has been steady increase in the national and international concern about the danger of ecological imbalance. Climate change has been perceived as the most important problem requiring immediate attention. Other issues of environment are not as important because the relationship between economic growth and the environment are so much obvious. The developed countries are active in this regard because they wish to shift the responsibility on the third world countries who are not so much responsible for the deterioration in the environment.

Developing countries being heavily dependent on climate related activities like agriculture and also because they do not have enough resources to adapt to the changing climate, are interested in stabilizing the climate. The international efforts are going on to bring an agreement on measures to safeguard the environment so that this planet can survive for a longer time. A framework convention on climate change (FCCC) was signed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 for securing the goal of stabilising green house gas emission (GHGs) at a level that climate system of this planet. In continuation of the same problem a protocol was signed at Kyoto in 1997. This protocol covers a legally binding agreement on mandatory emission cuts by the rich countries and voluntary cuts by the developing countries.

Socialist Yuvjan Sabha

Socialist Yuvjan Sabha (SYS) held its first National Convention on 18th December 2011, Sunday, at Sardar Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar, Sane Guruji Smarak, Pune. SYS is a national youth front of Socialist Party (India) - SPI. Formation of SYS was announced on 21st August, 2011 at the meeting of national executive council of SPI held in Delhi. Founder National Chief of Arogya Sena, Dr. Abhijit Vaidya, a cardiologist by profession, was entrusted the ad hoc responsibility to lead SYS. A national executive council of four members Dr. Hemlata, Niraj Singh, Prof. Niranjan Mahato and George Jacob was also announced in the same meeting. After this Dr. Vaidya visited Bihar, UP, J&K and was also in touch with members of the national and state councils of SPI from 12 states. Within few months of foundation the ad hoc committees of Delhi, Bihar and Maharashtra states along with Pune – PCMC city units were established.

The national convention was attended by around 300 socialist youths from nine states viz. Maharashtra, Delhi, Bihar, Kerala, Gujarat, UP, Karnataka, West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir. Within Maharashtra State youths came from 10 districts. The convention started with a 'powada' sung by Shahir Chitre, with TV star Ms Kshirsagar on 'dholaki'. Famous TV star Jasraj and his team presented the 'yuva geet'. Dr. Nitin Ketkar, chairman of the reception committee, welcomed the guests and delegates. A booklet titled 'Appeal to Youths' Hindi, Marathi and English by Dr. Vaidya was released by Dr. Prem Singh, General Secretary and Jayantibhai Panchal, Treasurer of the Socialist Party. Rashmi Vaidya, vice president, Pune SYS,

read messages sent by SPI president Bhai Vaidyaji and parliamentary board chairman Pannalal Suranaji. Prof. Neerajan Mahato and George Jacob expressed their thoughts regarding strengthening of SYS.

In his address to SYS cadets Jayantibhai Panchal said that "the Socialist Party is the need of the hour and youth wing is the need of the party. SYS deserves hearty congratulations for holding such a successful gathering of dynamic youths within four months of its foundation. This convention will convey the message to our country that young socialists are ready to take up the challenges posed by globalization, capitalism and fundamentalism."

Dr. Prem Singh in his address as the chief guest said that "India has a large population of youths. This youth power lacks definite political direction and SYS can fill this vacuum. SYS will have to study the past of the socialist movement in India but find new avenues for spreading socialism and must involve women power. Socialists in India led various people's movements, thousands of socialists were in the jail during freedom struggle and as well as many post-freedom struggles. Younger generation of socialists must maintain this tradition of going to jails for the people of India. Youths of SYS also should conduct extensive study camps on various issues."

Dr. Abhijit Vaidya in his presidential address expressed the desire that future leadership of SPI and also our country would emerge from SYS and said "Indian socialism has a very glorious tradition but unfortunately this tradition was

pushed to oblivion for few decades. SPI has revived this tradition and entrusted the responsibility to SYS of carrying it in the future. For this, we must connect ourselves with ideology of socialism and should take inspiration from great thinkers and leaders like Gandhi, Ambedkar, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia and Bhagat Singh." He emphasised that "the youth of SYS must adhere to the scientific bent of mind. Our country is facing challenges of globalization, privatization, consumerism, caste system, fundamentalism, rising poverty, collapse of public welfare, commercialisation of education, atrocities against women and backwards, corruption and so on. Farmers are committing suicide. Young generation of farmers wants to quit farming. We require Mahatma Phule's Farmer's Whip even today."

He added further that "privatization of education has created 21st century caste system which is an indirect effort to nullify Dr. Ambedkar's Annihilation of Caste. Privatization of health has encouraged five star medical tourism. IT sector and BPOs have created 21st century slavery. On the other side, unemployment is rising since banks have no funds for self-employed youths though they have enough money for people like Vijay Mallya who declares bankruptcy in King Fisher airlines on one side and continues his liquor empire on the other. To change all this we need to have a political revolution based on socialism."

He cautioned that "present political system has crushed dreams of today's youth about 'Balshali Bharat'. We need to change this political system to achieve our dreams and for this youths must join

politics. Many forces are cultivating hatred against politics in the minds of young generation. But politics is never dirty - it becomes dirty because of dirty people entering into it. SYS will try its best to change this trend. Jasmine revolution, started in Tunisia against dictatorial regime, is responsible for Arab Spring across the Arab World and Occupy Wall Street movement started against capitalistic economy across the world are a kind of non-violent revolution spearheaded by mainly youth. The language used by these youths is nothing but language of democratic socialism. The main inspiration for OWC movement came from economist Josef Stiglitz's article 'Of the 1%, for the 1% and by the 1%'. But any political revolution without proper leadership and political ideology will eventually lead to anarchy. Here we all must study Dr Ambedkar's famous speech Grammar of Anarchy. There is always a danger of fundamental elements taking advantage of this kind of political turmoil - like the Muslim Brotherhood has done in Egypt. Some forces in our country are trying to push our country also in the same direction under the pretext of anti-corruption sentiments. Corrupt Congress has to go but this should not make way for BJP-like parties. Socialist Party only can give the genuine alternative in this situation."

Post-lunch session started with Kranti ke Geet, Samuh Geetgan conducted by Rashtra Seva Dal sainik Baba Nadaf. In the afternoon 10-point youth manifesto of the SYS was read by Rashmi Vaidya. It was published in Janata of December 25, 2011.

Representative and guests from various states expressed their views on the manifesto. Amongst the prominent speakers were George

Jacob (Kerala), Prof. Mahato (Delhi), Dr. Ashwin Kumar (Delhi), Tarun Bannerji (W.Bengal), Pradeep (Kerala), Dinesh Pawar (Karnataka), Ranjit Mandl (Bihar), Ranjeet Thakare and Manoj Mane (Maharashtra).

Prof. Pramod Dalvi, General Secretary, SYS Maharashtra, conducted the proceedings. Other prominent persons present on the dais were Schidanand Singh, member

national executive, SPI; Varsha Gupte, Secretary, Maharashtra, SPI, Advocate Sudhir Nirpharake, president, Pune SPI. The programme concluded with the national anthem.

A team of around 50 SYS volunteers - Mundada, Ajgaonkar, Benuskar, Katti, Sonavane, Bahirat, Runwal, Bhandari, Hagavane, Nihar to name a few - worked relentlessly for a month to make this convention a grand success.

—AV



Rural India Focus

PRESENTING THE NATION WITH A REPLICABLE MODEL OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT



ADIVASI GIRLS HOSTEL AT TARA, PANVEL



WEEKLY EYE CAMPS AT THE YMC HOSPITAL, TARA, PANVEL



RUNS THREE HIGH SCHOOLS

YUSUF MEHERALLY CENTRE AND YOU

There are ways in which you can join the YMC movement in bringing education, healthcare, women empowerment, employment generation, relief and growth to our rural villages. Visit our Centre, volunteer your help, buy our products, become a Life Member. You could also support the cause by donating to our various initiatives.

SPONSOR AN ADIVASI GIRL'S HOSTEL STAY

It takes Rs.15,000 per year to meet the expenses for supporting a girl child's stay at the hostel in Tara, Panvel Taluka.



Yusuf Meherally Centre
D-15, Ganesh Prasad, 1st Floor,
Naushir Barucha Marg,
Grant Road (West),
Mumbai 400 007

FINANCE A CATARACT SURGERY

10 to 15 eye operations are performed at the weekly eye camp held at the Maharashtra State Government funded hospital building. Sponsor a cataract operation for Rs. 15,000/-.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE SCHOOL CORPUS

YMC runs 3 high schools - 2 Marathi, 1 Urdu medium. With only 2 of these on government aid, the Centre needs Rs. 1 crore as corpus to run the 3rd and maintain, conduct extra-curricular activities in all 3 and finance its building expansion plans. Give generously.

Visit www.yusufmeherally.org,
Call: (022)-2387 0097,
Fax: (022)-2388 9738 or
E-mail : yusufmeherally@gmail.com



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 66 No. 50
January 15, 2012

National Shame

S.Viswam

A Tale of Two Generals
Kuldip Nayar

Globalizing Social Democracy
D.K Giri

Scrap nuclear power projects
T. Shivaji Rao
EAS Sharma

Global March to Jerusalem

Code of Conduct for
Socialist Candidates

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

As many as 42 per cent of under-fives are severely or moderately under-nourished. Nearly 60 per cent of them suffer from severe stunting and wasting. This shocking disclosure is the product of a new study based on the height and weight of more than 100,000 children across 100 districts of six states. The study was done by the Hunger and Malnutrition (HungaMA) report of the Naandi Foundation. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh described the findings as a “national shame” and said that despite the impressive growth in India’s Gross Domestic Product in recent years, the level of malnutrition and under-nutrition is “unacceptably high.”

Syeda Hameed, Planning Commission member has termed the report particularly significant as it is a people’s or citizens report and reflects the high level of impoverishment among children even though malnutrition has decreased from 53 per cent to 42 per cent over the last survey. The 100 focus districts are located across Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Best states are Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh. However, even in the “best” ranking districts from the best states, 20 per cent of children

under six months of age and more than 40 per cent under five years of age are reported to be “stunted” or acutely malnourished. Underweight, “stunting” and low weight, all these factors have assumed alarming proportions.

Malnutrition among children can now be added to an already long list of subjects of “national shame” which “adorn” India’s social welfare portrait. How many more will be added? There also remain problems which arise, particularly among children, of food deprivation among economically weaker classes, leading to starvation and death, all of which are serious enough to be termed national shame. Then there is the country’s dismal record where both urban and rural health care, illiteracy, lack of drinking water, poor education and poverty are concerned. Post-independence development and progress in these sectors can by no stretch of the imagination be termed as matters of national pride. To India’s great sorrow, the overall record is a matter of a national shame.

Yet, as Dr. Manmohan Singh wondered, not only has the GDP been rising, but India touched the near-nine per cent annual growth

mark just a couple of years ago. Though the growth rate is hovering between 7 and 7.5 per cent currently, experts, within and outside the country, continue to sound optimistic about India's economic future. It is true that under the current free market economy mode, the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer. The consistently articulated note of optimism by all varieties of experts probably refers to the future of the "richer" rather than that of the "poorer". Particularly at a disadvantage presently seem to be the child population. Consider this: a study conducted by Childline 1096, a helpline service for children in distress, finds that child welfare continues to be accorded the least priority in planning and implementation of public service or amenities. Other than the public and private institutions directly charged with the protection of children almost all others exhibit a low level of sensitivity to children and low levels of preparedness for child protecting. National shame?

It has been suggested in the malnutrition study that poor awareness of malnutrition and low literacy levels among mothers are among the key factors responsible for the prevailing under-nourishment story. We must surely add to this a few other "key" factors. The national obsession with politics which directly and indirectly leads to over-emphasis on political issues and to total indifference to or neglect of social and national development issues. Poor across-the-board attention to education at the lower levels. Then indifferent implementation of anti-poverty measures. Indifference among the educated urban classes to rural-

(Continued on Page 6)

Between the lines

A Tale of Two Generals

Kuldip Nayar

The army chief is in the news in India as well as in Pakistan, but for different reasons. In both cases, the Supreme Court of either country is an arbiter. In India, Chief of Army Staff General V.K. Singh claims that his year of birth is 1951 while the Ministry of Defence has recorded it as 1950. If the government sticks to its date, as it is doing, he retires this May, nearly 10 months before his own calculation of birth date. Not General Singh himself, but some retired top brass have made it a point of honour for the armed forces and want him to vindicate it by challenging the government's decision in the Supreme Court.

In Pakistan, Chief of Army Staff General Parvez Kayani has already gone to the Supreme Court which has set up a commission of nine judges to probe into the charge that the army was contemplating a coup. The matter, called the Memogate, came to light a couple of months ago when the then Pakistan Ambassador to the US, Hussain Haqqani, sent a message to the US through a Pakistani businessman that President Asif Zardari required America's support because he apprehended a takeover by the army. It was October when Haqqani sought the help but he did not make it public till the US did so. The disclosure made General Kayani furious. To lessen his anger, Zardari ordered Haqqani to quit. This was not a fair charge against Kayani because why should he threaten a takeover when the

army already has the country under its control?

The argument that the Supreme Court surrendered to the army when it constituted the inquiry commission is churlish. And to make a charge against the Supreme Court chief justice Iftikhar Choudhary is meaningless. He is the person who suffered at the hands of the army, then headed by General Pervez Musharraf. Choudhary and his family were confined to one room and harassed in every way. But he did not give in.

Doubting his integrity is neither fair nor factually correct. It is possible that Haqqani was playing politics when he was sponsoring the message. But then this is not the first time that Haqqani is doing so. Looking at his career, it is evident that he is a man of all seasons. Jumping from one political party to another for feathering his own nest is all that he has as his achievements.

In fact, the constitution of the commission of Supreme Court and High Court judges was the only way to get at the bottom of the truth. There is no institution in Pakistan to which one can turn. The Supreme Court still evokes confidence and credibility. In fact, it has already issued a notice to Zardari to which he has replied.

This is the maximum one can achieve in Pakistan. The controversy over the date of birth of the army chief

would not have arisen in Pakistan because the conditions prevailing there are quite different from those in India. Yet the embarrassment caused over General Singh's claim could have been avoided if the matter had been handled better and earlier, both by him and the Defence Ministry.

I can appreciate General Kayani making a fuss because he felt that he was being blamed for an act which he had not contemplated. But I fail to understand why General Singh is making his birth date an issue when it was "resolved" between him and the Defence Ministry before he was appointed Eastern Army Commander four years ago and the army chief two years ago. He himself gave in writing to the Ministry of Defence that the matter was "closed."

Good or bad, General Singh should have adhered to what was decided then. It was wrong on his part to have consulted former chief justices of India to bolster his case or to brief persons who came to TV shows - resembling Kangaroo courts - to participate in discussions. It can be interpreted as an act of insubordination.

I heard some retired top brass converting the matter into an issue between civil and military. Such irresponsible talk, even if allowed in a democratic system, tantamount to challenging the ethos of our polity. General Douglas MacArthur, hero of the Eastern sector of Second World War, was dismissed by President Henry Truman when he found the General deriding democracy.

Even if the Defence Ministry's decision on his birth date is not to his liking or some of his ambitious supporters, the buck stops at the

table of an elected government. I am disappointed to find Bonapartism taking hold of some top retired military officers. The media itself should have undertaken the matter with care instead of sensationalizing it. The Pakistani media in the case of Kayani acted with restraint and responsibility. It has shown guts

even when threatened.

Saleem Shezad for example was abducted, tortured and killed, reportedly by a state agency last year. A commission of inquiry is still seemingly trying to find the murderer. He had broken the story on the infiltration of the armed forces

Lokpal Debate

This refers to Lokpal debate in Janata, January 1, 2012. Justice Rajinder Sachar leaves representation of SC, ST, OBC and Minorities, to the mercy or generosity of the PM, CJI and leader of opposition. How will this generosity work if there is a man like Narendra Modi on one of these posts?

Sachar Saheb is a great supporter of Women Reservation Bill and condemns Lalu and Mulayam for opposing it. How can he think of interpolating something in the Constitution, which was abolished more or less unanimously at the time of framing the Constitution? Shall it not be a violation of the basic structure of the Constitution? It may be pointed out that the reservations in Legislature were abolished on the near unanimous recommendation of the Minority Rights Committee headed by Sardar Patel. This was done because these reservations gave birth to two-nation theory, which was fought against throughout the Freedom Movement and on which, the country was divided which resulted in a partition horror. Kuldeep Nayar's opposition to the reservation scheme of the Constitution is based on meritocracy which is the burning faith of the upper castes, and elite classes, even though our all round failures are obvious during the 63 years of our Independence dominated by meritorious bureaucracy and judiciary while the reserve categories occupied only less than 5 percent posts.

His criticism of reservation on the basis of religion is right, but his targeting the whole reservation scheme, which is distorted by successive governments and misinterpreted and mauled even by the judiciary, is nothing but casteism by the upper castes and elite classes.

Anna Hazare's agitation was started to kill the demand of caste-census by the SCs, STs, and OBCs on which the Prime Minister had given assurance in Lok Sabha. It was steered by anti-reservation groups like Youth For Equality. Why should the wisest among us like Justice Sachar and Kuldeep Nayar, who have been fighting for empowerment of the people as against the state, support a proposal which is going to empower the state by creating a monster of approximately 4 lakh clerks and officers, while we already have a well-placed set up like Chief Vigilance Commission, Enforcement Directorate, CBI, CAG, Income tax Department etc. to deal with corruption?

—Mastram Kapoor

by elements close to Al-Qaeda or the Taliban. Several journalists from Baluchistan have been killed by non-state actors, said to be close to the security forces.

The compromise formula hawked in the case of General Singh is again bad in content and intention. The proposal to appoint him as the chief of joint staff suggests as if there are two parties and an agreement has to be reached so that none loses face. What is not realized is that there is only one party in democracy, the people who elect their representatives who, in turn, constitute the government. In fact, the very proposal to create a post of chief of joint staff is not acceptable. America has such an institution but the democracy there is 150 years old. Democracy knows of no compromise which restricts or impinges on people's say.

The irony is that all military coups in Pakistan have been at the behest of America. The Pakistani military has signed more defence pacts and agreements with America than all civilian governments put together. It is the Pakistan military which joined America in Afghanistan in the eighties and recently leased out Pakistan air bases and air space corridors to America. Still Washington did not trust the army when Osama-bin Laden was killed in a house at Abbotabad.

Both generals in Pakistan and India should introspect. General Kayani can get away with his allegation against the civil government and allow President Zardari say that he is supreme. General V.K. Singh cannot because in democracy, the elected government is supreme. He should have known it before he raised the dust.

scrap nuclear power projects in India

We feel deeply concerned at the recent attempts made by the Central Government to push through nuclear power on a large scale in the name of long-term energy security of the country in spite of its insignificant energy contribution for national needs and the ample availability of several safer and economically cheaper Energy sources like Hydro-power, solar and wind power, Biomass, Natural Gas, oil, lignite and thermal coal with least damage potentials.

Considering the risks and the costs involved in nuclear technology, USA and several other western countries have slowed down their respective nuclear power development programmes.

Germany has completely reversed its nuclear programme from a current share of 26 percent to zero in ten years to shift towards solar and other renewable sources of energy, whereas the share of nuclear energy in the case of India is hardly 3 percent and India has much more solar insolation compared to Germany. The western MNCs are looking towards India and other developing countries to further their business interests. And India is readily obliging. We are particularly concerned at the way the government has wantonly opened the floodgates to imported reactors based on imported fuels to form the main plank of India's nuclear energy development strategy.

Against widespread public opposition, the Central Government first entered into the Indo-US Nuclear deal, followed by similar bilateral deals with the other reactor manufacturing countries. Under their

pressure, the Central Government enacted a law on capping the liability that could be passed on to the reactor suppliers in the event of an accident. But for the relentless efforts made by some parties in the opposition, the cap on the liability as finally incorporated in that law would have been much lower. Even then, the cap so fixed i.e. around Rs.1,500 crores, is in no way commensurate with the huge liability that could arise in the event of an accident of the kind that occurred at Chernobyl or Fukushima. In Fukushima, the latest estimate of the liability is placed at Rs.3,00,000 Crores!

As a result of the ridiculously low cap imposed by the Act on the liability to the reactor supplier, it is the Indian tax payer who will be forced to bear such a huge burden of about Rs.5 lakhs crores in the event of an accident. Indirectly, the government caved in to subsidise the foreign reactor suppliers heavily to an extent of Rs.5 lakhs crores at the expense of the Indian tax payer and, more importantly, introduced an element of moral hazard that would compromise the safety of design of the imported reactors. The Act clearly defied the well established "polluter pays" principle that is internationally accepted.

The positive feature of this law was that it included clauses 17(b) and 46 that would enable the victim of an accident, if it had occurred as a result of any deficiency in the design of the reactor, seeking damage compensation from the suppliers.

More recently, coinciding with the meeting that the Prime Minister had with the President of USA in Bali, the

Central Government announced the details of the Rules made under the civil nuclear liability law, indirectly agreeing to a further dilution of the intent of the Act itself. Rule 24(1) precludes the operator from seeking any 'consequential damages' from the supplier, under Section 17(a) of the Act, to compensate for the larger damage the suppliers could have caused to the public and the environment to an extent of about Rs.5 lakhs crores. In addition, the way Rule 24 has been framed imposes an artificial time limit of five to ten years on the liability claims that either the victims of an accident or the Indian operator can seek from the reactor supplier. Fukushima is an example of how an accident can take place anytime during the lifecycle of a reactor with unimaginable damaging consequences [costs of accident:Rs.55,000 crores].

Evidently, the Central Government has once again caved in to the overtures of the foreign governments, this time, even going contrary to the intentions underlying the passage of the liability bill in the Parliament.

The fact that the reactor suppliers are insistent upon limiting the liability that would occur in the event of an accident, is the clearest possible pointer to the fact that nuclear power technology and its impacts are unpredictable and heavily risk prone. After the accident at Chernobyl, unable to decontaminate the reactor site, Russians are now building a concrete sarcophagus for the stricken reactors and are seeking external financial assistance of \$2 billion. One should not be surprised if Fukushima meets with a similar fate. The clean up activity at Fukushima will run into billions of dollars and it is doubtful

whether a hundred percent clean up will ever be possible seeing that the ocean and the aquatic life have also been contaminated.

No wonder that the World Bank and its sister financial institutions, as a matter of policy, do not fund nuclear power projects. Nuclear power is such a bad business proposition, that similarly, no private venture capital will finance it. Insurance companies will not insure nuclear power facilities because their impacts on health and the environment in the event of an accident can be huge and are largely outside human control. Both Chernobyl and Fukushima attest to this. For example, at the most critical time of radioactive fallout from Fukushima, the winds went out 'to sea'. Had they blown in the direction of Tokyo, the government would have had to evacuate 35 million people and Japan would have faced financial bankruptcy and a serious political crisis. What would happen to India's environmental treasure trove of the Western Ghats, one of 34 ecological hotspots in the world, as a result of a core melt-down at Jaitapur?

An accident of the Fukushima kind will dent the Indian economy in an irreversible manner, affecting its ability to deal with the more pressing problem of Drinking water supply, sanitation, Disease prevention and removing poverty.

There are genuine public apprehensions about the safety of nuclear power. These apprehensions have gained ground after the Fukushima tragedy in Japan. There are equally genuine apprehensions about the lack of transparency in the functioning of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) headed

by no other than the Prime Minister himself. This is corroborated by the fact that, despite the continuing public entreaties and the assurances given by the Central Government, DAE has shown inexplicable reluctance to disclose the past safety audits conducted in respect of the existing nuclear power stations and the corrective steps taken. DAE has rarely taken the public into confidence in the case of incidents of radioactive leakages in nuclear power plants, such as the one at Kakrapar in May, 2001. It is ironic that the citizens of India should depend more on the domestic media reports and external sources of information such as IAEA to learn about the minor and major accidents in the existing nuclear power plants than being taken into confidence by DAE itself.

The Atomic Energy Act has many non-disclosure clauses that seem to be inconsistent with the citizen's right to know under Article 19.

In the case of new projects such as the ones at Jaitapur (Maharashtra) and Kovvada (AP), the procedures of selection of reactor suppliers have been opaque. The people living around the project sites have rarely been taken into confidence on the likely implications in the "exclusion zone", "sterilized zone" and "emergency planning zone", extending up to 16 km from the project site. Simulation studies show that the radioactive winds can blow far beyond these limits. In fact, the emergency planning zone in USA extends up to 80 km and 100 km in Finland.

Both DAE and NPCIL seem to believe that the citizens are not entitled to express their apprehensions about the safety of

the nuclear power plants. Yet, it is the citizens of India who will be left to pick up the burden and cost of a nuclear disaster. Bhopal is an on-going grim reminder. NPCIL has often brushed aside such apprehensions on the ground that the citizens are not scientifically well informed, without trying to share its own knowledge with the people. It is well known that there are many gaps in the scientific and technological knowledge about nuclear power and there are many unresolved problems such as the one pertaining to waste management. Empirical evidence of accidents involving core melt downs (including Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and Fukushima) attest to the role of human error and mechanical failures in nuclear accidents. These and 'Acts of God' through natural calamities are difficult to forecast or assess. This may not be denied by any rational thinking person. The Precautionary Principle, a well established judicial principle, squarely places the burden of clarifying the citizens' doubts on DAE and NPCIL. Both DAE and NPCIL seem to have shifted this burden to the citizen to plead his or her case before the courts. The citizen's fundamental right to live, as provided in Article 21, is under a grave threat.

While the government is trying to wash its hands off these issues by introducing a Bill to create an "independent" nuclear regulator, in the ultimate analysis, the regulator can at best enforce what the law and the rules prescribe. The regulator cannot provide answers to the concerns expressed above.

Nuclear power is not just the most expensive source of energy. it is, in our considered view, potentially unsafe. There are

credible alternatives to it. India's energy future should be based on improvements in efficiencies in generation, transmission, distribution and end-use of electricity, along with environmentally benign renewables, rather than on technologies that bear huge potential risks. Even nominal efficiency improvements down the electricity supply line will yield such huge generation capacity savings that will render nuclear energy redundant.

Several others who were earlier committed to nuclear are revisiting their energy strategies. Pursuing the unsafe nuclear route when there are more sustainable, benign

alternatives has no rational basis.

We therefore appeal to the government to revisit its energy strategy that has placed undue emphasis on nuclear power and shift it towards a cleaner, safer, more sustainable energy future. We appeal to the Prime Minister to look beyond the advice rendered to him by DAE and NPCIL and call for a wider, more citizen-friendly debate on this important issue of public policy before the country is inundated by foreign reactors based on imported fuels that endanger the energy security of the country like never before.

- T. Shivaji Rao, Director,

Center for Environmental Studies, GITAM University, Visakhapatnam

- EAS Sharma,

Former Secretary (Power), Govt. of India, Former Adviser (Energy), Planning Commission.

(Continued from Page 2)

centric problems. No basic medical or health care in rural areas. And, now, of late, the over-emphasis on the rate of economic growth. All these factors in combination work towards creating many areas of "national shame".

There is greater distress in public expression and debate when the rate of economic growth declines, and correspondingly high jinks when the rate rises. Our planners and policy makers, the prime minister downwards, calculate national progress and welfare in terms of the level of growth. Hence their perspective gets distorted, because we have seen in India that the rate of economic growth does not reflect the grim realities of life and living on the ground.

Let us listen to Dr. Amartya Sen who said last week in Bangalore that

India must not obsess with how fast its economy is growing and instead pay more attention to its human development indicators which are worse than even that of Bangladesh. Slower growth is not a good enough reason for national gloom. If India really must feel upset, it should be because the country is unable to provide proper nourishment to millions of its children or adequate healthcare to the poor, he said.

Is it not an irony that six decades after independence, several matters of national shame should remain unaddressed effectively by successive governments? Our planners and policy-makers remain insensitive to the problems of the poor and tend to get excited when the rich gets richer and the country comes to boast of dozens of billionaires. This is a matter of even greater national shame than the one which has left Dr. Manmohan Singh highly disturbed.

Globalizing Social Democracy

D.K Giri

Social Democracy as a political platform is not in the forefront. It is defensive. At one point, in 1999, thirteen out of the 15 European Union member states had social democratic centre-left governments. Now out of 27 member states in the European Union, just one, Slovenia has a social democratic majority government. Apart from Slovenia, there are five others - Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, and Luxembourg - where social democrats are members of ruling coalition. Social Democracy seems to be growing in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, but it is certainly in decline in Europe, which has been the ideological epicenter of Social Democracy in the world. All over the world, out of 90 odd full members of Socialist International (SI), only 12 are in governments - Angola, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Mali, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Paraguay, South Africa, and Uruguay - and 15 as part of ruling coalition - Austria, Belgium, Fairland, Iceland, Iraq, Ireland, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Pakistan, Serbia, Switzerland, Zimbabwe. Surprisingly, for whatever reasons, from India, the largest democracy in the world, no party or organization is a member of Socialist International - neither a Full, nor Consultative, nor an Observer member, and no organization is Fraternal, nor Associated organization.

Absence of any Indian party or organization merits a full-fledged discussion, which ought to happen sooner than later; but it is beyond the scope of this article. To my knowledge, one or two

socialist parties in Europe and officials of Socialist International have been courting the Indian National Congress to join the social democratic group, namely the SI, but the Congress party does not respond to their overtures, and membership application of ADS, which had the observer status with SI, is pending with the Ethics Committee of the SI.

However, what is being argued and advocated here is a case for Global Social Democracy. Some of us have been arguing for some time that Social Democracy in India declined as an organized political force as the ideology got too identified with individual leaders, however good or great they were, and got caught later on in ego and personality clashes losing at the same time international accountability to the ideology. Likewise our European comrades must realize that Social Democracy in Europe is meeting a similar fate as it has become too Eurocentric. In fact, some of them have begun to believe that now. Alfred Gusenbauer, the chair of 'Next Left' Research Programme of Foundation of European Progressive Studies, Brussels and the former chancellor of Austria, writes, "social democracy may have had European origins, but its future will not be written by Europeans alone". He is also strongly arguing that if Social Democracy has to reinvent itself, re-establish its position, and regain the legitimacy to act on the political centre stage, it has to reflect deeply on its methodology of achieving its perennial universal values, and it must go global. The second part of his argument is what I strongly endorse and engage with within

this essay.

Comrade Alfred identifies three major challenges of the 21st century - globalization, post-industrialization, and individualization. I would like to call them three different but somewhat similar trends, - individualism, consumerism, and cynicism and add three more - migration, climate change, and terrorism. No single country alone can handle these, it has to get into an interdependent relations, which again is arguing for another case for Internationalism per se which again is outside the scope of this article, but if Social Democracy has to combat these challenges, it has to go beyond the national boundaries, embrace the values, practices and traditions of other countries, otherwise it will be ineffective in catching the imagination of voters. For instance, if it has to deal with the issue of migration, integrate the immigrants into the host societies, it has to adopt a multicultural framework, which Europeans have no experience of. Let us briefly deal with each of those challenges, and examine why Social Democracy has to be global in order to meet the challenges.

Individualism

This social-political trend is bred both by neo-liberalism and capitalism. Individualism, in turn, breeds hate and selfishness, an attitude of all-for-myself, bereft of feelings of sacrifice and solidarity. In the name of respect for and protection of individual liberty, there is a new sinister definition of community, which consists of individuals who seek fulfillment in unbridled consumption created by neo-liberal

capitalism, and who let their other personal, social and community relations atrophy. Individualism as it prevails in the West destroys family and communities, whereas in the East, an individual exists only as a part of a community. Surely, the westernization has invaded or crept into Eastern societies as the leaders from the West find it convenient to deal with familiar categories. It is time the West realized this political and cultural danger, and consciously participates in and promotes other cultural practices.

Consumerism

A century ago, the famous Irish dramatist Oscar Wilde said, “we live in an age when unnecessary things are our only necessities”. It could not be truer in the current age of globalised capitalism. Neo-capitalism created in the process of globalization is leading to rabid consumption. We have cars for each member of the family, televisions with flat screen in each room of a house, and more than one cell phone per person. Through massive, seductive advertisements, big businesses are manipulating the tastes of the consumers and phenomenally increasing their sales. Individualism also leads to consumerism, because an individualist hardly believes in caring or sharing. Individualism plus consumerism leads to cynicism amongst people.

Cynicism

Globalization or global capitalism did two damages that need to be repaired. One, it polarized the market outcomes between winners and losers. Winners were the top few who reaped the rewards with movement of capital, technology and skills, and the losers were the low-skilled, asset-less people who could not fit into the competitive global market. The second damage,

following from the first, is that the winners become individualistic and the losers become cynical, the latter having got detached from the communities they lived in. Consequently, there is terrible loss of interest in or engagement with public causes or politics. Numerous people boycott elections, or participation in public life, as they believe that nothing much is going to happen for their well-being. So, cynicism across the globe became a major trend in politics. The historical role of Social Democrats has been to temper capitalism and to reconcile it to just labour conditions, but this fight cannot be launched successfully within national boundaries. Also, because globalization, like the EU project, has led to free movement of people, goods, capital and services, only a global unity can address the cynicism or disengagement that can corrode the basic frame of democracy, without which socialism is not viable.

Migration

Free movement of people in either EU integration or globalization process has led to heavy migration not seen before. The immigrant communities face cultural problems of integration with the host communities, and worse, are often the scapegoats for the bad fallouts of market economy like loss of jobs. The third problem is the hostility from the host communities. This is a major problem, as migration is caused both by push and pull factors. In the new economic order, pull factors are greater but they are not embraced by ethnic communities. The media is partly responsible for hyping up the racial and immigrant conflicts which may occur from various other sources. Also, they do not emphasize the different skills and cultures the immigrants come with. Social tensions resulting from

migration can be tackled by adopting multiculturalism as framework for governance. Social Democracy must go global in order to draw on these experiences mainly from Asia. Our European comrades or for that matter anyone who believes in cultural superiority must re-read Kipling’s poem. No doubt, Kipling’s famous following poem had a humanitarian argument, but it also reflected the arrogant assumption of white man’s supremacy.

*“Take up the white man’s burden
Send forth the best ye breed
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captive’s needs
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild
Your new-caught sullen peoples
Half-devil and half-wild”*

Climate Change

The impact of climate change is global. Even though the polluters are rich industrialized countries; the impact will be felt by all. Also, the efforts have to be made by all countries to tackle the challenge of climate change, for instance, if the deforestation takes place massively in the developing countries, the carbon sinks will reduce and heat up the earth more. So, as the argument was nicely articulated by Anthony Giddens in his book, “Politics of Climate Change”, a global problem requires global solutions and global structures. Climate change cannot be negotiated by national sovereign states that tend to defend their individual interests. In order to transcend the national boundaries, Social Democrats have to go global.

Terrorism

Like climate change, terrorism needs a global approach. Admittedly, terrorism is not a global phenomenon; there are a few trouble spots which breed terrorism. But the consequence

is felt globally, again in the wake of free movement of capital and people. Terrorism badly hits families, society, politics and economies. This is worst of the crises the world faces, as it leaves trails of mayhem and bloodshed. International cooperation is an absolute precondition to fight the menace of terrorism. Social Democrats must unite to fight terrorism in any form and anywhere in the world.

Finally, Social Democrats must undergo an exercise of self-introspection and deep reflection in order to create a new platform, a progressive coalition of forces from all the three sectors – governments, markets and civil societies. Civil society movements across the globe are powerfully challenging authority and even the legitimacy of politicians like it happened recently in India, in the Middle East, or “make poverty history” movement in the West. Social Democrats need to co-opt and co-operate with civil society leadership. Social Democrats need to promote “responsible business” and “inclusive growth”, more importantly, redefine the role of the government. Social Democrats have been accused of being statist as in creation and maintenance of the welfare state; government had to play an interventionist role through taxation, and financial regulation. It is now being proposed that one should talk of global welfare state(s), national governments in such case will have lesser roles, and this will also absolve them of the charge of interventionism. Finally, in order to enrich the philosophy and methodology of Social Democracy, one requires inputs from all parts of the world – from different social and political traditions and cultures, which now manifest in many countries in various forms. Social Democracy has to be global.

Global March to Jerusalem

"But in my opinion, they (the Jews) have erred grievously in seeking to impose themselves on Palestine with the aid of America and Britain and now with the aid of naked terrorism. Why should they depend on American money or British arms for forcing themselves on an unwelcome land? Why should they resort to terrorism to make good their forcible landing in Palestine?"

- Mahatma Gandhi (1946)

"When the Palestinians are free, our struggle will be complete."

- Nelson Mandela (1994)

The past year has witnessed great upheavals across the world, where the masses are challenging the neo-liberal imperialist paradigm and clearly the US-Israeli empire is on the retreat. And it is precisely the Palestine-Israeli imbroglio that stands at the centre of the geo-political crisis. For over a period of nine decades, the Palestinian resistance has stood at the very vanguard of the global struggle against imperialism and Zionism.

After having successfully organized the "First Asian Convoy to Gaza" - we are now embarking on the first "Global March to Jerusalem". The Asian Convoy to Gaza was the first collective Asian effort, whereby 160 delegates from 17 Asian nations, marched across eight countries over a period of 38 days. Remarkably, there were more than 60 delegates from India itself and this was really welcomed by our Palestinian and Arab friends, who all have great respect for India's contribution to the anti-colonial struggles and Third World solidarity. As we passed from city to city across the various countries, public meetings, press conferences and various interactions were organized by the host nations and the media was extremely supportive of this effort. It

was indeed a historic venture that has now established a unified pan-Asian movement for Palestine.

The international land convoys and flotillas have all contributed to gradually ending the siege of Gaza and the isolation and delegitimation of Apartheid Israel. After the Asian Convoy to Gaza, we Indians and Asians, reassessed our strategy in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and over a period of 10 months, in a series of consultative meetings with the Palestinians, the key Arab and international allies, it was decided that it was now time to counter the Judaisation of Jerusalem and stand in solidarity with the Palestinian masses.

It is out of that endeavour that was born the idea of the Global March to Jerusalem, scheduled for the 30th of March 2012.

The Palestinians cannot and will never accept a Palestinian state without Jerusalem, which lies at the very heart of their historical and cultural consciousness and which Israel has unilaterally declared as its eternal capital, in violation of all UN Resolutions and International Law.

Thus we now need to draw the international focus onto Jerusalem, which is the core issue and lies at the

very centre of the conflict.

The objective of the Global March to Jerusalem is to raise the global consciousness and awareness on the threat to Jerusalem, posed by the incessant Judaisation and the Settlement Blocks, as well as the monstrous Apartheid Wall, which have cut off Jerusalem from the West Bank.

Our convoys will converge from across the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe and will amass on the borders of Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, with delegations that will join us from the rest of the continents and the majority of the nations of the world.

The Asian convoy will once again commence from New Delhi in

early March and across a period of 20-25 days, we will traverse across Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Syria and Jordan. The African convoy will start from Morocco and travel to Egypt, whilst the European convoy will commence from London. The delegates from North and South America, Australia-Oceania will join the convoys, or fly directly to the bordering nations.

In Solidarity,

Feroze Mithiborwala-Sandeep Pandey- Shaheen Kattiparambil

feroze.moses777@gmail.com / ashaashram@yahoo.com / shaheenkm@yahoo.com

National Alliance of People's Movements - International Affairs Committee and The Palestine Foundation (India)

Endorsing Organizations:

1) Dr. Suresh Khairnar - All India Secular Forum, National Convenor 2) Adv. Mukul Sinha - Jan Sangarsh Manch, National President 3) Brig. Sudhir Sawant - Pariwartan Morcha, National President 4) Mujataba Farooq bhai - Hind-Philistine Manch, National Convenor 5) Niaz Faruqi – Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Hind, National Working Committee 6) Pannalal Surana - Rashtra Seva Dal, National Convenor 7) Anil Chaudhary – Insaaf 8) Sanjay Singhvi – Trade Union Centre of India, General Secretary 9) Sunilam – Kisan Morcha, National Convenor 10) Qamar Agha –Peace and a senior journalist 11) Kishore Jagtap – Bharat Bachao Andolan – National Vice-President 12) Ambarish Rai – Right to Education Forum, National Convenor 13) Rakesh Rafique – Yuva Bharat 14) Saeed Noorie – Raza Academy, National Convenor 15) Varsha V V – Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar & Mahatma Phule Vichar Manch, Convenor 16) Insha Malik – Indian Youth for Palestine (Member, National Committee) 17) PK Sundaram – Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament 18) Jyoti Badekar – Awami Bharat (Member, National Committee) 19) Akshay Kumar – Nav Nirman Samiti (National Convenor) 20) Gopal Rai – Teesra Swadheenta Sangram, National President 21) Ajit Jha - Lokrajniti Manch, (Member, National Committee) 22) Mahesh Pandey - Asha Pariwaar 23) Aslam Khan – Revolutionary Youth Movement (Member, National Committee) 24) Sandeep Singh – All India Students Association, National President 25) Sohel Ajani – Hussaini Youth and Ishna Asheri Youth Foundation 26) Zahid Qadri – Help Hyderabad!!, Convenor 27) Mustafa Zaidi – Tanzeem-i-Jafri

Report on Fielded Candidates in Uttar Pradesh finbds that 77 of these candidates have pending criminal cases based on their previous affidavits filed during the 2007 assembly elections or subsequent elections and Lok Sabha. 38 candidates out of these 77 have serious criminal cases, like MURDER, ATTEMPT TO MURDER, ROBBERY, THEFT, KIDNAPPING, etc against them as declared by them in their earlier affidavits. This list of candidates with serious charges includes 13 candidates from BJP, 13 from INC and 12 candidates from SP.

Party	Declared Candidates (Total)	Affidavit Records available with ADR / NEW	Candidates with criminal background	Candidates with serious criminal cases
BJP	220	91	26 (28%)	13 (14%)
INC	215	75	26 (35%)	13 (17%)
SP	165	77	24 (31%)	12 (15%)
RLD	17	5	1 (20%)	0 (0%)
BSP	NOT ANNOUNCED			
Total	617	248	77 (31%)	38 (15%)

–Anil Bairwal, National Election Watch, June 6, 2012

Communal Riots 2011

Asghar Ali Engineer

Riot-free India still remains a distant dream. Like every year this year too several communal riots took place though earlier months did not witness violence and it appeared 2011 may be communally less violent. But during the middle and end of the year frequent riots took place once again shaming India. However, one can, on positive side, say that riots like Mumbai riots of 1992-93 and Gujarat riots of 2002 have not taken place. But there is reason for this. The Shiv Sena or BJP, even if they want, cannot organize riots on such major scale. It needs highly emotional and surcharged atmosphere which cannot be generated so easily. It can be generated around some major event like demolition of Babri Masjid or some such major event.

The account was opened in Umarkhed in Maharashtra on 13th January when some Hindu boys indulged in eve-teasing of a Muslim girl and stone throwing started on both sides and people started running leaving their shoes and chappals fearing major outbreak of violence. But the police officer Mr. Deokatte controlled the violence effectively and called for reinforcements from district place. It shows that if police is impartial it can control violence effectively and second thing that an ordinary incident like eve-teasing can become a communal issue instead of mere law and order issue. On such things we get divided into Hindus and Muslims. Even if cricket ball hits someone we get communally divided or some accident takes place we communalise it. It is all a result

of constant communal propaganda going on by communal forces and the way our education system shapes our minds.

On 7th February there arose some dispute between a Christian father and a rickshaw driver and strangely it assumed communal color between Hindus and Muslims. Some communal elements gave it a Hindu-Muslim color and entered into a Muslim Mohallah and pelted stones in which 10 persons were injured and they also set several houses and shops on fire and several vehicles were also burnt. This mob did not spare even tribals in the area. But unfortunately the police played a partisan role and lathicharged Muslims and Adivasis only, even though Muslim properties were mostly targeted.

Baroda in Gujarat, another extremely communally sensitive area, witnessed communal violence on 16th February when some mischievous elements attacked a gate erected for celebrating Eid and burnt it. Several vehicles were also burnt down. One Chamis Kahar from fisher community was arrested. Kahars and Muslims often clash in Baroda as some Kahars and some Muslims are in illegal liquor business. A major riot had taken place between Kahars led by Shiva Kahar and Muslims in 1982 in Baroda.

On Monday, 2nd March some communal elements in Sewri area of Mumbai tried to tear flags and posters put up on the occasion of

Prophet's birthday and situation had become tense in the area. On 5th March after someone pushed a child the situation took a violent turn and stoning began from both sides. Some people even molested Muslim women. The police again alleged to have played partisan role and instead of taking action against the mischievous elements lathicharged Muslims and arrested many young Muslims. According to the Police Commissioner communal color was given to these incidents and he brought about reconciliation between the two groups.

Next incident took place in Aurangabad, another communally sensitive area of Maharashtra. It happened on 20th March when some Muslim boys and girls were returning from S.B. College after appearing for accounts paper. The Muslim girls were wearing veil and despite this some communal elements threw color on them and when they resisted they took out knives and guptis and attacked them. Four students were seriously injured. The police arrested the attackers, including those who had run away from the scene and Vice Chancellor Prof. Pande of Dr. Ambedkar Marathwada University took prompt action against the administration of S.B. College who had refused to take any action against the attackers who were communally motivated.

On 6th April there were communal clashes between Hindus and Muslims in Dharavi, the Asia's largest slum area in Mumbai, which is very sensitive and had witnessed

large number of deaths in communal clashes in 1992-93 and subsequently Mohallah committees were formed to bring about peace in the area. On this occasion four persons were injured. The peace committee had done commendable work in Dharavi and it was after a long time that communal clashes occurred here. The peace committee is no more active.

Maharashtra state unfortunately is communally quite sensitive and a large number of communal clashes take place in this state every year. And in Maharashtra, Mumbai and its suburbs are more sensitive. Maharashtra witnessed largest number of riots in last decade i.e. from 2001 to 2011. In all 1,192 riots took place in Maharashtra, the highest in India in which 172 persons were killed whereas in U.P. in all 1,112 communal incidents took place in which 384 persons were killed.

In Meerut communal violence broke out on 25th April, strangely enough, on a glass of cold water. It all happened in Qazipur village near Meerut on Sunday the 25th April when 3 persons from the village came to Choti Masjid and asked for water. When they were offered tap water they insisted on cold water and on being said there was no cold water the men became violent and beat up the person who offered tap water and also imam of the mosque and some children studying there. They went to police station to complain but police did not take action. Many Muslims gathered outside the police station and began stoning in which city magistrate and some police officers were injured.

The crowd now attacked shops and houses. The crowd set fire to

many police chowkies also. As a precautionary measure the police had to order all government and private schools to remain closed. And all this on a glass of cold water. Meerut is also a communally sensitive area and had witnessed horrible communal violence in 1987 in which PAC (Provincial Armed Constabulary) had pulled out 54 innocent Muslim youth from their houses and shot them dead and threw their dead bodies in Hindon Canal.

Next incident also occurred in U.P in Moradabad. Some policemen entered into a Muslim house looking for one accused and not finding him there misbehaved with women of the house and seized Qur'an from the hands of Nurjahan, a 10 year old girl and turned the bed on which she was sitting thus throwing away Qur'an. This enraged Muslims as it implied dishonoring the Qur'an and the provoked crowd of Muslims began demanding action against the policeman concerned before dispersing.

Police kept on asking them to disperse and Muslims crowd kept on demanding action against the policemen and they also attacked the police thana and set fire to police vehicles and began stoning policemen. This of course enraged policemen and they began beating Muslims and also fired in which two Muslim men and one Hindu, an employee of petrol pump were seriously injured. Curfew was imposed. Most of the people from the village fled to nearby jungle fearing arrest and for fear of police violence.

Even a regional movement, thanks to ABVP, a BJP student wing of Osmania University, like the Telangana movement got

communalized when six Muslims of Adilabad district were burnt alive on 8th July in a village which is located on the border of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Miscreants set fire to a minority house in Watoli village, Adilabad district. Nearby Bhainsa town has a communal history and hence Government is quite alert. Among those killed in Watoli village are Mehboob Khan, Noman, Arsalan, Rizwan, Safiyah Begum and two year old toddler Tuba Mahosh.

On 12th July Agra's Mantola region saw eruption of communal violence. A truck carrying a sick goat for cure to hospital brushed against some people of the other community and argument began between the two groups belonging to different religions and soon stones flew and properties, shops, houses and vehicles began to be burnt and firing also took place. The police also had to fire. The DIG on duty escaped by a hair's breadth in the private firing. People were firing from the roofs of their houses. The Police force had to be increased in the area including PAC. The rioting was controlled with great difficulty.

Moradabad came under bout of communal violence again on 8th August when a procession of Kavadyas (Shiv Bhagats carrying Gangese water) was not allowed to be taken out from a Muslim Mohallah passing with a mosque. First the Kavadyas were confronted with the police and then they began firing on the mosque. Since Iftar time was nearing police was not ready to take any risk and Kavadyas were insisting on passing through the Muslim Mohallah.

When Muslims came out for tarawih prayers Kavadyas tried to

stop them and then they went berserk and began setting fire to motorcycles and other vehicles and they also set fire to police vehicles. They also stoned a mosque nearby. They also set fire to many trucks parked nearby. Also from below the bridge firing took place which happens to be a majority populated area. This shows it was well planned measure.

On 22 August in Jabalpur a town in M.P. two communities argued on the question of a religious procession and in no time stoning began and police had to clamp curfew in 6 police thana areas. In these clashes some persons were injured quite seriously. Jabalpur also has communal history. It had witnessed first major communal violence of independent India in 1961.

On 25th August Bahraich in U.P. witnessed outbreak of violence. Bahraich is also highly communally sensitive area. Some dispute arose between groups of two communities outside a mosque and soon it assumed violent form and both the groups started pelting stones at each other and some even resorted to firing in which one person who was seriously injured died while being taken to hospital in Lucknow. Several persons were injured in rioting.

On 25th August communal violence broke out in Titwala, in Thane district on the occasion of Janmashtami. Some Hindu miscreants attacked Muslim youth and started beating them and damaged several properties and vehicles belonging to Muslims. A Muslim delegation with pictures of violence met home minister of Maharashtra Shri R.R.Patil. These miscreants are roaming around in

Muslim Mohallahs and Muslims of the area are living in fear of being attacked. The police role, the delegation alleged, was also questionable.

On 2nd September on the day of Eid communal violence erupted in Newasa in Ahmadnagar district of Maharashtra. The police, it is alleged, played highly partisan role and those Muslims who went to police station to file FIR were themselves arrested under 307 and sent to jail. This happens very often and so Muslims generally avoid even filing FIRs. Many Muslims fled Nawasa and took refuge in Ahmednagar city. In this riot in Nawasa, Muslims were attacked with knives and swords and one Zaki's office was totally ransacked and yet police took no action. On the contrary action was taken by the police against Muslims and several of them arrested under section 307.

On 3rd September riot broke out in Ujjain, M.P. which has large Muslim population. In this riot two persons were killed and 16 injured. It is said that riot broke out in Daulatganj area of old city when a shopkeeper installed Ganesh idol in his shop adjacent to a mosque. But it is not clear whether rioting broke out only for installation of idol or something happened around it. Apparently installing idol in a shop, even near a mosque, should not be cause enough for communal violence.

On 7th September communal violence broke out in Aduni Tehsil of Kurnool district in Andhra Pradesh in which hundreds of people were injured of which three injured people were quite serious. The cause was what happens often – music before mosque. Police had to resort to

baton charge repeatedly to disperse the mob. Mob on both sides was resorting to stone pelting. This stone pelting went on for more than 4 hours and then police had to resort to firing in air. Ganesh idols were being taken for immersion in nearby canal. This procession stopped near a mosque and went on playing music and the whole trouble erupted. Both the groups had brought stones in autos and trucks.

Next violence broke out in Nandurbar, a tribal area in Maharashtra on 8th September. This also happened when Ganesh idols were being taken for immersion. Two persons were killed and several were injured. The violence broke out mainly because of illegal Ganpati Mandal and Muslims allege that Inspector Ramesh Patil was mainly responsible for this violence and he played very partisan role and terrorized Muslims. Here too those Muslims whose properties were destroyed and who went to lodge FIR were arrested under section 353, 32 Muslims were arrested whereas only 12 non-Muslims were arrested. And under section 302, 6 Muslims were arrested and under section 307, 12 Muslims were arrested. The Muslims of Nandurbar were so terrorized that those who had lived for years there are not prepared to go back to their houses.

On 14th September the biggest riot of the year took place in Gopalgarh, Bharatpur, Rajasthan in which 11 persons were killed and nine of them by police firing inside mosque. In Bharatpur mainly Meo Muslims live. There was disputed land of cemetery which Hindus claimed that it was a pond of water for their cattle which Panchayat had wrongly allotted for cemetery to Muslims.

Ashok Gehlot has miserably failed in controlling communal situation in his state. In 2010 also Rajasthan witnessed two big riots in Saroda and Mangal Thana and in both these places police openly played partisan role. In Saroda, Udaipur district 30 Muslim houses were burnt in presence of District Magistrate and S.P. which was very serious offence on the part of high government officials and Gehlot did not even suspend them. I personally urged upon him to suspend these officials and large number of Muslims gave dharna outside his office but he took no action. With a result that communal minded police officials became very bold and at other sensitive places too serious communal riots occurred.

When riots took place in Gopalganah initially Gehlot dismissed it as mere land dispute but Sonia Gandhi rebuked him and he suspended Collector and S.P. Communal situation in Rajasthan is very bad and Gehlot has mishandled it. BJP is openly using communal card to come back to power and Gehlot does nothing. Even the Congress delegation and M.P.s delegation felt Muslims were killed by one-sided police firing. Muslims of Rajasthan are very angry with the C.M. Gehlot and many of them even boycotted his official functions.

Though Bharatpur as such is a communally sensitive district, Gopalganah, a village in that district, had never known communal violence and Hindus and Muslims had lived in peace and harmony. Meo Muslims are even otherwise culturally half Hindus and many have Hindu names and observe all Hindu festivals. BJP often complains that Muslims are not part of mainstream and that is why communal prejudices remain alive. In Bharatpur Muslims are very much Hinduised,. And yet we see such

horrible communal violence.

Another riot took place in Rudrapur, Uttarakhand, a BJP-ruled state. Rudrapur too had no communal history but it saw serious communal rioting. It seems in Rudrapur a deliberate attempt was made to incite communal violence. There was no spontaneous incident leading to communal violence. No one could be identified. Two attempts were made, one failed and one succeeded in inciting violence.

In first incident someone kept pages of Qur'an tied in a red cloth as if dipped in blood near a Sani temple on 28th September night. When worshippers came on the morning of 29th September they found it. It appeared as if the cloth was dipped in blood. Both Hindus and Muslims were angry but the police controlled the situation arguing with Muslims that Hindus.

But second attempt succeeded when on 2nd October, Gandhi Jayanti some pages on which Arabic letters were written tied in a green polythene bag. The bits of paper were mixed with some kind of meat and the bag was kept near the same temple. First a crowd of 150 Muslims gathered first around 6-30 in the morning and then the crowd grew up to 800 and became violent. In this violent eruption some 38 policemen and district officials were injured. Then the Hindu mob came

from the other side and now situation went totally out of control.

According to the police more than 30 civilians were injured and some 100 vehicles were torched. The Delhi-Nainital Highway was full of burnt vehicles near Rudrapur and mere steel skeletons were left. More than 100 shops were totally looted and destroyed. The FIR names in all 37 persons of whom 24 have been arrested. The situation would have been saved if the district administration and police had acted promptly on 29th September itself and arrested the miscreants. The state government therefore, replaced DM and IG police to restore peace.

This was the account of communal riots which took place during 2011 and it would be seen that all these riots took place on extremely petty issues. It can be seen that eruption of communal violence on such petty issues is possible only because due to constant communal propaganda strong prejudices prevail and there is total lack of confidence in each other. Also the police is prejudiced against Muslims and often sides with miscreants aggravating violence and thirdly poverty and unemployment makes it possible for large crowds to gather and take part in rioting.

Unless these factors are addressed it would be very difficult to ensure total communal peace in our country.

In Pakistan, 2011 has been marked by the killing of hundreds of persons by extremist religious groups, including by those operating within the security forces. Killings have even targeted high-profile personalities, such as Mr. Shahbaz Bhatti, the governor of Punjab province, and Mr. Salman Taseer, the federal minister of minority affairs. The government's inability to halt religious and sectarian intolerance has strengthened banned militant religious groups in their efforts to organize, collect funds and hold large rallies. Girls from minority groups were forced to convert to Islam according to Christian and Hindu organizations. Some 161 persons faced blasphemy charges in the Pakistan in 2011. Nine of them have been killed.

- Asian Watch

Code of Conduct for Candidates

As it is the need of the hour to scrupulously practice principled politics to restore confidence of the people in the democratic processes, the Socialist Party has formulated a code of conduct for the candidates to be put up by the party for elections to Parliament, State Legislatures, and Panchayati Raj Institutions and persuade the aspirants to abide by it.

At the party's national committee meeting held at Lucknow on 5-1-2011, the following code of conduct has been adopted:

1. Application of only such person will be considered by the Parliamentary Board who has enrolled himself as primary member of the Socialist Party enough in advance of election for which the person has submitted application to either the district or state committee of the Party.
2. The applicant is expected to be active in social activities that are consonant with the objectives of the Party for at least five years before.
3. He/she should have clean record of behaviour, both personal and public. There should be no criminal case for offence including moral turpitude pending against him/her.
4. The party will not give ticket to an applicant who has not cleared all taxes due to be paid by in good time.
5. The party will not give ticket to an applicant who had, in course of the election process concerned, had tried to get ticket

from any other party.

6. A candidate, selected by the party for any election mentioned above, will have to furnish a statement about his assets and liabilities to the Party also besides the returning officer concerned.
7. The candidate will conduct his election campaign in a simple manner. He may not hire or use more than two four-wheeler vehicles. His canvassers will, in batches of two or three, move around on bicycles to meet the voters.
8. The candidate will not pay donation to any group or Mandal


during the election campaign time.

9. The candidate will not host feast etc. for anybody including the canvassers.
10. The candidate will not solicit votes on the basis of caste, religion, creed or similar grounds. He/she will not indulge in vilification campaigns against the rivals. The whole campaign should be carried on the basis of the Party manifesto.
11. The candidate will not deface any surface or cause damage to any property public or private, during the course of the election campaign.

—Pannalal Surana

Chairman, Parliamentary Board, Socialist Party (India)

Acharya Javadekar
A Satyagrahi Socialist



G. P. Pradhan

Price: Rs. 20/-
Janata Trust
D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir
Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W), Mumbai 400 007.

Books by
Surendra Mohan

1. **Vikas Ka Rasta: Nai Arthik Neetiyon ka vishleshan..**
Price 600 rupees.
2. **Samajwad, Dharma Nirapekshata aur Samajik Nyaya** Reissued as second edition; Price 500 rupees
Published by Rajkamal Prakashan, 2a Netaji Subhash Road, New Delhi 11002
3. **Vartaman Rajneeti ki Jwalant Chunauiyan.**
Price 400 rupees.
4. **Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia ki Neetiyon:** (This booklet was published late last year.)
Price 25 rupees.

Published by Anamika Publishers and Distributors. Ansari Road, New Delhi 110002



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 66 No. 51
January 22, 2012

Ego or Polity
Kuldip Nayar

Not A Bright Future
Rajindar Sachar

**Forming a Socialist
Government**
D.K Giri

Bharat Ratna For Ghalib
Asghar Ali Engineer

**Where ants drove out
elephants**
Stan Swamy

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

But is it honourable?

S.Viswam

The declared objective of the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Gen. V. K. Singh in dragging the government to the law court is that his honour must be vindicated and his integrity upheld. But is the action of moving the court solely a matter of honour or does one need to look deeper to trace motives? The good General is now disputing the government record on his date of birth. If it is wrong, certainly, he needs not only to dispute it but do whatever he can, within the bounds of the discipline which his office enjoins on him, to set the record right. But he himself accepted the government record to be accurate and not seek to correct it on a couple of earlier occasions when he was promoted. Those promotions were based on the government record which specifies his date birth to be May 10, 1950. But the General now says that the correct date of birth as entered into his matriculation certificate is May 10, 1951, the date by which his retirement date has to be calculated. If the government date is to be accepted as right, he will end his tenure as Army Chief in the next few months, that is, in May 2012. However, if the government accepts his plea that the correct DOB is May 10, 1951, the Army Chief will stay on for another year of service. In view of this, it is not surprising that eyebrows are being raised and questions posed on whether or not the Chief's complaint rests on honour and integrity or on another year's tenure. Not a healthy state of affairs. The Supreme Court whom the Army Chief has approached will now have to decide which of the two records is accurate and what is the correct date of birth.

This is the first time in India's post-independence history that the government of India has been dragged to the court by a serving Chief of Army Staff, and that too in a matter that impinges on the process of selection of top posts on the basis of seniority. The general's action will be seen by many as a mark of indiscipline, unsoldierly and opposed to the great traditions set by an apolitical institution. Surely, some other line of action, for instance, resignation followed by a legal recourse, was open to him. But by going to court he has not done any glory to either the institution he has served so loyally for 36 years or the high office he has held for the last two years. This is a charge he will have to refute credibly if only to make his motivations clear and above board. The point in his favour is that the matriculation certificate supports his claim, and the General

says this should be treated as sacrosanct and the final version. Yet, why did he then accept three promotions based on a date of birth which did not conform to the sacrosanct version? Did he forget the matriculation certificate on those occasions, placing tenure above honour?

But, to be fair to him, it needs to be said that neither the Army nor the Defence Ministry which runs it nor the highest echelons in power have covered themselves in glory either. Indeed, the Defence Minister, reputedly an indecisive leader and a namby-pamby politician at the best of times, needs to offer some explanations also. He has allowed room for a variety of speculation on the choice of Gen. Singh's successor. Again, not desirable. Why did he allow the controversy—the general himself fuelled it constantly and in public—to fester to a point where a high ranking “officer and a gentleman, the Army Chief no less” has been forced to seek justice at the law court. And then, typical of the way the administration runs these days, the government, at the behest of the Prime Minister, files a caveat at the last minute seeking time to see if the general can be appeased in some way and his honour and integrity upheld. In any other country, the general would have been sacked by now for insubordination if not for falling out of line.

The quality of Indian democracy, with all its shortcomings and potholes, has been universally held to be high. This is largely because it has been sustained till now by the institutions which run the system which rests on well-thought out checks and balances. To the Army's

(Continued on Page 3)

Between the lines

Ego or Polity

Kuldip Nayar

The issue of the two army chiefs, in India and Pakistan, still dominate the discussions. Chief of Army Staff V.K. Singh has done the most unprecedented thing by going to the Supreme Court on his birth year which he claims is 1951 while the government says repeatedly that it is 1950, meaning thereby he retires this May.

I wish the matter had been handled with care and caution. Preferably some amicable settlement should have been found and things allowed not come to such a pass. Defence Minister A.K. Antony is known to be balanced and experienced. Why did he let the issue reach the point of no return?

Yet that does not justify a bit General Singh's knock at the Supreme Court's door. This is the worst choice he has opted for to encourage such talk that the civil has humiliated the armed forces. What BJP leader Jaswant Singh, a parliament member, has said tantamounts to Bonapartism. He says the sword of the armed forces has been blunted. Thank god, he is not in the government. Otherwise, the retired army officer that he is, he would have done unimaginable harm to democracy. It is a pity that even the 15 years he has spent in parliament has not yet worn out the dictatorial tendencies in him. In democracy, people's sovereignty, the civil side, is supreme and not the military or any other institution.

Woefully, the views aired by the sacked Naval chief Vishnu Bhagwat are no different. Understandably, he is bitter because he was a victim of communalism—when the BJP was in power. But at least he maintained the balance of not going to the Supreme Court. He did not convert the issue into civil versus military which General Singh has tried to do and which Jaswant Singh had the temerity to support. I was shocked to hear General Katoch saying that political leaders are on twitter. I do not know how he came to occupy a top position with such views?

When I rang up former Air Chief Idris Latif at Hyderabad, he was horrified over General Singh's appeal to the Supreme Court. He is probably of the old school that service comes before self and that the military does not challenge the order of a government, whatever one's feelings.

After General Singh had accepted the year 1950 for promotions, particularly at the time of his elevation as army chief, he should not have gone back on his commitments. This is what he and his supporters should ponder over. Their behaviour smacks of dangerous ambitions and when some former top brass interpret the age issue as the confrontation between the civil and military, they mock at India's democratic state.

People are proud of the armed forces but they do not want them to

be anything except apolitical. Once the government, elected by the people, decides anything there is no question of disobeying it. General Singh should have resigned and then gone to the court if he was so incensed.

I wish the BJP had rapped General Singh on the knuckles. Or, does Jaswant Singh represent their viewpoint? No doubt, the government has handled the case insensitively. But the question has become bigger. Chief of the Army Staff has challenged the Union of India. There is no dilly-dallying when the question of the country comes. General Singh has wrongly been advised and he has compromised the position he holds.

The government has filed a caveat in the Supreme Court so that the case is not decided without hearing the other side. It is a case of indiscipline and should have been dealt that way, not through the court. I am shocked to hear that some compromise has been tried through back channels. This should have been done before the army chief went to the court. Now it looks like a compromise at the expense of people's sovereignty which the government represents.

General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani case has been taken over by some other developments in Pakistan. Prime Minister Yousuf Reza Gilani put the army chief on the spot by criticizing him that he should have sent his reply to the Supreme Court inquiry into the memo for the US help through a businessman, Mansoor Izaz, not directly. Not only that Gilani dismissed his defence secretary who had said that "the country is" under the control of the

military and went on to say that he would not tolerate "state within state."

While the army was posted at Islamabad the infamous brigade which has helped stage coups in the past, Gilani convened the meeting of parliament to declare the confrontation was between democracy and dictatorship. He wanted a vote of confidence in him but the consensus was on the support of democracy.

I know Gilani went out of the way to defend in parliament General Kayani and ISI chief Shuja Pasha when America killed Osama bin-Laden at Abbotabad without letting Islamabad know. But everyone learns from mistakes and Gilani is no exception. In fact, he has brought the nation together behind the demand of democracy after realizing that whatever the outcome of the crisis, Pakistan's problems essentially flow from the control of the army over administrative matters.

Another development in Pakistan is that the Supreme Court has issued a contempt notice to Gilani. He has been taken to task for not obeying the court's order for reopening the cases of corruption against President Asif Ali Zardari and the late Benazir Bhutto. The government's defence has been that both of them and some others were exonerated by former President General Pervez Musharraf through the National Reconciliation Ordinance he issued.

While writing this column, the fate of Gilani was not known. But whatever the outcome he is the first Prime Minister who has withstood the pressure of the army. People may blame him: why did he not stand

up in the four years of his regime? Probably, the army did not throw its weight about as it did during the regimes of General Ayub Khan and Zia-ul Haq. Probably, Gilani was waiting for an opportunity and hit back when it arose.

True, all eyes are on the Supreme Court—the Supreme Court which gave legal sanctity to the first coup by General Ayub inventing "a doctrine of necessity". Chief Justice Iftikhar Choudhary has given independence to the institution, something which Pakistan needs.

Indeed, Pakistan has changed. But India is yet to understand how. People and political parties are unanimous in opposing to the return of the military. Democracy has come to stay, however belatedly. This prepares the ground for both countries to be friendly neighbours. There is no option to peace. Even if they consider it a punishment, they are sentenced to perpetual normalization.

(Continued from Page 2)

credit it must be said that it has remained strictly apolitical. An army-government confrontation is not healthy for our democracy. If such confrontation affects the army's morale, the worse for the country. The present confusion has arisen because of the multiplicity of government records—again a systemic shortcoming. Different sections of the army seem to be maintaining different set of records. This shortcoming at least can be addressed without loss of time. Of course, it would be helpful to all concerned if issues of seniority and promotions are tackled with a greater sense of responsibility and transparency.

Not A Bright Future

Rajindar Sachar

The forthcoming Assembly elections, coming so soon after the farcical debate on corruption in the context of Parliament's fiasco on Lokpal Bill, would exert, some expected, greater pressure on political parties to avoid selecting candidates against whom there was a suspicion of criminal background and lack of integrity and honesty in public life.

But alas not only is this consideration totally absent, but on the contrary, the justification for selecting such tainted candidates is being unembarrassingly emphasized by parties. With the BJP, not being in a position to defend induction of Kushwaha, ex-BSP Minister of U.P, against whom charges of corruption have been leveled, it was sought to be justified by saying that he was from a very backward caste without realizing that this was no defence but rather an abuse as it suggested that the criminality was the usual trait of this caste. Cynically a similar explanation was given by Mohan Singh, the former spokesperson of Mulayam Singh's party, for having sponsored the case of D.P. Yadav, with proved criminal background, by seeking to justify by saying that "his being history sheeter enlarges his capacity to get votes, and that though such leaders get caught, their communities rally behind them more strongly."

It is unfortunate that these small caste leaders instead of using caste as a tool for social change in a radical manner to remedy the denial and injustice done to them, (as

advocated strongly by Dr. Rammonohar Lohia) are using it perversely for their own small selfish gains, unmindful of the damage they are doing to the revolutionary fight necessary for eradication of the evil of casteism. No, I am not against the affirmative action for giving their dues to the Dalits and other deprived castes. I am rather more for it because one has to atone for the injustice and deprivation imposed on them in the past. As Dr. Lohia explained "Nepotism, jobbery, opportunism, flattery, non-adherence to truth and a tendency to twist doctrines to suit particular motives are some of the traits of Dvija leadership. These traits will remain with the Dvijas unless they make a conscious effort to bridge the gulf between themselves and the Dalits. The Dalit too has his shortcomings. He has an even narrower sectarian outlook. Once in office, the Dalit tries to perpetuate himself by having recourse to dirty sectarian methods."

How prophetically this description applies to Mayawati method of building self-statutes and getting herself on her birthday weighed in lakhs of currency notes more in the image of a small chieftain during the British Raj. Why does it not occur to her that her dismissal of about a dozen ministers charged with corruption and incompetence inevitably reflects on her leadership and also her collusion in all these deals – would people be wrong to say that either she is so incompetent that she did not know of their corruption, or the other alternative

which is more credible that she was a fully knowing party to all their dealings and is now purporting to keep a distance as an election strategy.

It is true that we, in India, are too liberal in finding excuses for the misdeeds of respective caste leaders. We need to break this iron ring of caste. In this context all political parties need to do self-introspection and give heed to the warning given by Dr. Ambedkar thus, "The second thing we must do is to observe the caution which John Stuart Mill has given to all who are interested in the maintenance of democracy, namely, not 'to lay their liberties at feet of even a great man, or to trust him with powers which enable him to subvert their institutions'. There is nothing wrong in being grateful to great men who have rendered lifelong services to the country. But there are limits to gratefulness. As has been well said by the Irish patriot, Daniel O'Connell, no man can be grateful at the cost of his honour, no woman can be grateful at the cost of her chastity and no nation can be grateful at the cost of its liberty. This caution is far more necessary in the case of India than in the case any other country. For, in India, Bhakti or what may be called the path of devotion or hero-worship, plays a part in its politics unlike any other country in the world. Bhakti in religion may be a road to the salvation of the soul. But, in politics, Bhakti or hero-worship is a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship."

Our parties still continue to ignore the warning about criminal elements in our legislatures given by Vice President of India at All India Whips Conference, “Exactly 23 percent of MPs elected in 2004 had criminal cases registered against them – over half of these cases could lead to imprisonment of five years or more. The situation is worse in the case of MLAs”.

Notwithstanding these observations the present partial lists of candidates in Uttar Pradesh announced by various political parties show an agreement between them that criminal background of the candidate is considered a plus point. As per the record of 2007, of candidates fielded by the BJP 28 percent are with criminal

background out of which 14 percent are with serious criminal cases against them. Similarly, the Congress – 35 percent with criminal background and 17 percent with serious criminal cases. Mulayam Singh’s Samamjwadi Party shares the same ignominy – 24 percent with criminal background and 12 percent with serious criminal cases. BSP has not yet announced its candidates, but there is no reason to believe that it will lag behind.

Irrespective of the results of U.P. Elections one may regretfully accept that the population of U.P. is going to remain a victim of the evil of criminalization and corruption-ridden government. A sad day for Indian Democracy. Without a more vigilant public outrage things will not improve

in near future.

Lest the bureaucracy feel smug satisfaction at the dirty face of political class, it may be well advised to critically self-examine the reported news that higher bureaucracy in finance ministry are so concerned with improving the plight of the poor in the next budget that they have sacrificed their week-end to study this problem at a five star retreat, equipped with facilities of massaging, and share their work with entertainment from Bollywood stars and singers. If true (I have not seen any contradiction) I can only cry out in pain for my country with the Shakespearean refrain in Hamlet’s words, “there is something rotten in the state of Denmark (substitute India).

Highlights of the reports on five States going to poll

- 33 percent of ministers i.e. (33 out of 100 analyzed) have self-declared pending criminal charges as per their affidavits filed during previous Assembly Elections. 17 ministers out of these 100 analyzed have declared serious IPC charges like murder and attempt to murder pending against them.
- Uttar Pradesh has the maximum percentage of ministers (46 percent) with pending criminal cases (21 out of 46). Out of these 21, 14 (30 percent) ministers have serious criminal cases pending against them.
- A total of 41 ministers (i.e. 41 percent of the total analyzed) are crorepatis.
- Punjab has the highest crorepatis i.e. 83 percent in its Cabinet followed by Goa and Uttar Pradesh with 67 percent and 37 percent respectively.
- The average asset of a minister in the 5 states comes out to be 3.02 crores even though Manipur has no crorepati in its Cabinet.

State	Total No. of MLAs	Total No. of Ministers Analyzed	Ministers with Pending Criminal Cases	% of Ministers with Pending Criminal Cases	Ministers with Serious Pending Criminal Cases	% of Ministers with Serious Criminal Cases
Uttar Pradesh	403	46	21	46%	14	30%
Punjab	117	18	7	39%	3	17%
Uttarakhand	70	12	4	33%	0	0%
Manipur	60	12	0	0%	0	0%
Goa	40	12	1	8%	0	0%
Total	690	100	33	33%	17	17%

Performance of the 5 Assemblies and the MLAs.

- Goa has the maximum average number of sittings/year (26) followed by Manipur (24) and UP (22).
- The least average number of sittings/year is for Punjab and Uttarakhand (19)
- The highest average attendance of MLAs is in the Uttarakhand Assembly (91 percent) followed by Punjab (71 percent) and Manipur (65 percent). Uttar Pradesh MLAs have the least average attendance (20 percent).
- This compares very poorly with the number of sittings of MPs in Lok Sabha. The current Lok Sabha in the last 2.5 years sat for 208 days which averages to about 77 days in a year.

State Assembly	No. of Years considered	Number of Sessions held by the Assembly	Total number of days of sittings	Average number of days of sittings/year	Average attendance of MLAs(%)	No. of times assembly adjourned
Uttar Pradesh (till Feb '11)	4 years	10	89	22	23%	26
Punjab (till Mar '11)	4 years	10	76	19	71%	14
Manipur (till Aug' 11)	4.5 years	11	110	24	65%	11
Uttarakhand (till Sept '10)	3.5 years	11	68	19	91%	108
Goa (till Feb'11)	3.5 years	12	95	26	60%	85
15th Lok Sabha (till Dec '10)	2.5 years	9	208	77	NA	NA

Manipur

- 3 candidates i.e. 1 percent (out of 258 analyzed) with self-declared pending criminal charges contesting in the Manipur Assembly Elections.
- A total of 33 candidates i.e. 13 percent are crorepatis.
- A total of 170 candidates (66 percent) have declared that they have never filed income tax returns.
- 89 (35 percent) have not given PAN details.
- The number of male candidates is 246 (95 percent) whereas the number of women candidates is only 12.
- Number of re-contesting MLAs – 41
- The average assets of these MLAs as declared in 2007 was Rs 23,69,931 (23.6 lakhs)
- The average assets of these MLAs as declared in 2012 is Rs 1,21,78,887 (1.2 crores)
- Average asset growth for these re-contesting MLAs is Rs 98,08,956 (98.08 lakhs)
- Average percentage growth in assets for these MLAs is 414 percent.

—Anil Bairwal,
National Election Watch,
January 10, 2012

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-
Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque
on
Mumbai Bank
in favour of
JANATATRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai 400 007

Forming a Socialist Government

D.K Giri

Will India ever have a social democratic government? We can address this question in two ways, with optimism and with realism. Optimists would say nothing is impossible in life; anything could happen. Future is difficult to predict. A good many optimistic people come to public life to win elections, secure power and positions. Also many people work in politics to pursue their convictions and aspirations, just to be a part of public life, not necessarily to win power. They have a rationale that they cannot win in present state of political mobilisation, so they feel content in being there. There are two more approaches to winning power, none should compromise with one's fundamental beliefs to come to power, and the other, winner takes it all; what matters is who wins, not how. Those believing in the first are idealists, and the second category of people is supposed to be pragmatists. This is a false dichotomy. The burden of my arguments in this article is to combine optimism and realism, idealism and pragmatism. It is not a truism to say that an optimist cannot be a realist, or that whoever adheres to ideals is not practical. In the light of these assumptions, let us explore how a Social Democratic government can come to power in India. Before we do that, let us reflect on the past.

Learning from Mistakes

Why is a socialist party not being viable and victorious in India, although the social and political fabric is clearly conducive to socialism as

well as democracy? In fact, both these political objectives are written into the Preamble of our Constitution. There may be several reasons for the failure of Socialists to build a formidable party to form the government. I will like to deal only with the organising principles. When the socialist party was formed in 1934, securing membership was not easy. One had to register as a member, undergo a probation period of six months before becoming a full member. It was easier to join the Communists. But, then, later on, the party decided to become a mass-based not a cadre-based party. That diluted the seriousness of recruitment, and sincerity of a member to the principles of the party. It was a mistake. A political party must have cadres who strongly believe and identify with the party ideology, and members who are supporters or sympathisers of the party. But, both cadres and members have to sign the membership. The second and third mistakes were related to idealism. When there was a socialist government in Kerala, led by Pattom Thanu Pillai, there were disturbances in Travancore-Cochin. The Administration had to resort to firing, and seven people got killed. Although the National Executive of the party in a resolution regretted the firing, socialist leaders like Lohia demanded the resignation of the whole government. Was it called for? The resolution was quite forceful morally, it read, "We have failed to formulate a code of conduct for a Socialist government in handling the problems of law and order. So, it is really a failure of the entire

movement and the National Executive and we share the blame". The resolution was passed with majority vote. Yet the party split on this very ground. Again when the socialist party walked out of Congress in 1948, Acharya Narendra Deva went to the Speaker of the UP Assembly and said they would resign; since they were elected on the Congress ticket, they said they had no moral right to continue in the Assembly. Even when the Speaker tried to dissuade them saying there was no anti-defection law, all of 14 MLAs resigned and went to seek re-elections, and all of them lost except the one who won uncontested. The electorate must have been confused and felt let down as the Legislators had thrown away their mandate. The fourth mistake was far more fatal from which socialists have not recovered yet. That is splitting the party, and showing horrible lack of unity among them. Each split has weakened the party and its new formations. The split and disunity have been caused by self-righteous attitude of some leaders, and later on, by the quest or even hunger for power. Madhu Dandavate a veteran socialist, who stood for principles all his life, writes in "Dialogue with Life" that one should not wreck the instrument one builds to fight for political causes or power. Professor Dandavate asserted that he and many of his colleagues were not part of any split, but some comrades "had acquired the mastery and finesse in the art of splitting". This is the most important lesson from the past; splits sap the morale of the members and the image of the party.

Recruiting Members

Any political party ought to have members who sign the membership form and pledge to uphold the principles and policies of the party. Since the Socialist Party merged with Janata Party on 1st May 1977, there has not been any all India Socialist Party. Samajwadi Party, led by Mulayam Singh Yadav or Janata Dal (S) of Deve Gowda, are remnants of Janata Party, led by former members of Socialist/Janata Party. Socialist Party (India) was formed in May last year. One wishes great success for Socialist Party of India. But the point I am making here is the membership of the party should be through an honest and transparent recruitment drive. A socialist party has to be a “party with real difference”. If it sticks to its ideals and principles, it will succeed in the longer run, in electoral battles as well. Because, we do not have any political party in modern sense of the term, most parties have bogus membership drives - members are all on paper; and many parties have no membership drive or register at all. There is strong misperception that if one recruits members, the party base is limited, perhaps like that of the communist parties, and the party cannot be a mass-based party to win elections. The socialist party also fell victim to this perception, although there was initially membership drive, study circles for members’ education, etc. I remember, after the formation of Janata Party, Piloo Mody went on hunger strike demanding membership forms to be printed. The Janata Party did not believe in a membership drive. Recently, when I was recruiting members for Association for Democratic Socialism (ADS), which is a non-party political ideological group engaged in research and

advocacy, a Congress member, formerly in Socialist/Janata Party refused to sign the membership, although he has been and is an active participant in ADS activities. I have not discussed with him the reasons for his refusal, but my guess is that he is reluctant to identify himself with an ideological group whilst he is in the Congress, as Congress party does not believe in any particular ideology; it has been, since Indira Gandhi became its leader, driven by power politics. On the other hand, one of the serious and valued socialist comrades, had a visiting card with a line that read, “a social democrat in search of a party”. This is both ridiculous as well as tragic that a committed social democrat cannot join a genuine socialist party. Another indication of the sorry state of socialists unattached to a party for want of membership recruitment drive is that most socialists are known by their membership of socialist party pre-1977. There was no new membership. Any socialist was introduced as “hamare purane samajwadi”, our old socialist. While I was in Yuva Janata in 1980, I was known to be a socialist for my admiration for and identification with Madhu Dandavate, Surendra Mohan, Samarendra Kundu, G G Parikh. But interestingly, when I was introduced by the old staff at 7-Jantar Mantar, then the headquarters of Janata Party, I was called an “old socialist”, when I was only 20 years old. This was again in reference to pre-1977 socialist party. I share these anecdotes to underscore the point that it is a terrible vacuum, not to give importance to membership by socialist parties, even those in existence today. An ideological party cannot survive without members who carry its messages, and no party can compete in elections without strongly organised cadres. These

days the parties could set up call-centres for the people to apply for membership and use various other mechanisms for recruitment. Those who think that it is being too idealistic to have genuine and trusted cadres they are not being practical. One cannot compete with Gandhis and many other political families, in dynastic and so-called mass-based politics. If socialist parties want to win elections, they have to contribute to changing the political culture, where ideas and integrity are respected.

Members’ Conduct

Socialists have been accused of a lot of personal bickering and jealousy leading to deep disunity in the party. This may have sprung from the tendency of the members and leaders that “I am a greater socialist than others, the “holier-than-thou” attitude. The new culture should be that members talk to each other, not about each other. Socialist party should be bound by a spirit of solidarity and camaraderie. Members must have consideration for each other. If all members adhere to a set of party tenets, there will be no room for self-righteousness. The party must follow internal democracy. This does not mean that there is always an election for each position. There has to be a process of consultation to ascertain each member’s view, before taking a decision. Late Surendra Mohan coined a word to avoid polling in the party in order to preclude tensions and divisions. That was called, “uncontested election”.

Even a century-old political party like the SAP of Sweden, never had party elections; so the party did not split. It requires great political sagacity to stomach a defeat in the

party. In India, a veteran socialist always split the party whenever he lost a party election. Along with modern and rational organising principles, the party needs to imbibe an ideology and announce its principles.

Party with an Ideology

I wish to quote a veteran social democrat Member of British Parliament, and a renowned professor of politics, David Marquand who said, "The values of Social Democracy are perennial, timeless. They are liberty, equality and solidarity, but the method to achieve them could be context-specific". The praxis will then require reformism. For instance, socialist parties' initial objective across the world was to look after the workers' welfare as they began to be exploited by post-industrial revolution capitalism. But the current emphasis should be 'general welfare' somewhat like Mayawati's party which rose from a Dalit base to 'Bahujan', (majority welfare) to 'Sarvajan' (general welfare). Likewise, socialist parties will have their own cadres, but will have to focus on all.

Finally, in order to win power, the socialist party has to stand out as a "party with difference". It has to implement its idealism into practical action. We have had varieties of socialism "Scientific socialism" of Karl Marx, Evolutionary socialism of Fabians, Democratic socialism of Europeans, Revolutionary socialism in Latin America. Now it is time for Practical socialism that combines democracy and socialism while creating a new political culture with high standards.

Bharat Ratna For Ghalib

Asghar Ali Engineer

Justice Markandey Katju suggested that Ghalib be given Bharat Ratna and it appealed to me and several of my secular friends and so I initiated an online petition to collect signatures. It got quite a favourable response but few friends disagreed, their secular credentials are as impeccable as of those who readily agreed with the petition. I am writing this note to explain our point of view as well as replying to the objections these friends raised.

Some friends pointed out that first we must study the act whether posthumous awards can be given. This objection was not very weighty as more than half a dozen posthumous awards have been given but then question arose what would be time frame for giving posthumous awards – why not to Tulsidasji or Kabir? Yes, there is weight in this argument and time frame has to be there otherwise it would go up to even, say, five thousand years ago too.

I think right now we are concerned with modern secular India and our engagement with modernity begins with British period which is also known as modern period in Indian history. Modernity created lot of conflict between rigid orthodoxy and liberal modernity. Modern India obviously could not have been built on rigid orthodoxy, though people are free according to our Constitution to believe in orthodoxy and thousands of them believe in it even today.

But our Constitution and our liberal secular ethos are the essence of our modernity and Ghalib

represents this eminently. He was a poet par excellence and his poetry represents modern secular values along with the value of love. Ghalib's poetry is ghazal poetry though he wrote in other genres also but he is mainly known for his ghazals which is basically love poetry. And he was follower of what is known as wahdat al-wujudi school of Sufism which is most liberal school among Sufis.

This school was founded by Muhiyuddin Ibn Arabi who says in one of his poems: my Deen (religion) and my shariat is love and love is the very foundation of my philosophy. Most of the Indian Sufis, though not all, belong to this wahdat al-wujudi school and it is liberal ethos of wahdat al-wujudi Sufis which created our composite culture and these Sufis whole-heartedly embraced local cultures and mainly wrote in local languages including Marathi, Punjabi, Kannada, Tamil, Gujarati and so on.

What is the implication of philosophy of wahdat al-wujud? Wahdat al-wujud means Unity of Being i.e. real being is one and we all (whole humanity) are its manifestations and those who believe in this philosophy do not distinguish between one human being and the other and one religion and the other. Ghalib's entire poetry is representative of these ethos.

In this respect, Ghalib's mathnavi (a form of long poem each verse of which has two lines (Chiragh-e-Dayr) i.e. lamp of a temple. This mathnavi is about Banaras the sacred Hindu city through which he passed on his way to Calcutta and

he was so enchanted by its beauty that he wrote this poem in Persian which describes its charms so much so that he says that once anyone who saw the flowing Ganges of this city, his/her eyes will never be harmed. Describing its beautiful damsels he writes "Their dainty and silken touch beats the pearl softness".

It is Kashi (Banaras) where springs of the world take refuge be it in hot summer or cold winter i.e. its weather is most suitable weather in the world. The poem is so full of praise for Banaras that there is 'no city like this in the world'. There is so much poetic exaggeration in describing charms of Banaras. Not only this mathnavi but Ghalib's entire poetry very eminently represents cultural ethos of India and particularly its composite culture.

Ghalib had friends among all communities of India - Hindus, Muslims, Christians - and several of his disciples were Hindus. He has addressed several of his letters to his Hindu friends. He was so fond of unity of all human beings that when several of his friends were killed in war of independence he wrote in one of his letters that they say now we will meet on the day of judgment (Qiyamat) but what kind of meeting it would be? Sunnis will stand separately from Shi'ahs and Hindus separately from Muslims. Can it be called meeting together?

Ghalib indeed was precursor of ethos of our modern secular liberal India, one of its architects. Our Constitution has been based on such values and minus these values our nationhood would be seriously weakened. These are representative values of our nationhood. Even in

(Continued on Page 14)

A long, sad year after Salman Taseer's killing

Pervez Hoodbhoy

One year ago, the assassination of Salman Taseer, Governor of Punjab, shook liberal and secular Pakistan to the core. Never had the country looked so rudderless.

Fearlessly championing a deeply unpopular cause, this brave man had sought to revisit the country's blasphemy law which he perceived as yet another means of intimidating Pakistan's embattled religious minorities. This law — which is unique in having death as the minimum penalty — would have sent to the gallows an illiterate Christian peasant woman, Aasia Bibi, who stood accused by her Muslim neighbours after a noisy dispute. Taseer's publicly voiced concern for human life earned him 26 high-velocity bullets from one of his security guards, Malik Mumtaz Qadri. The other guards watched silently.

In the long, sad, year more followed. Justice Pervez Ali Shah, the brave judge who ultimately sentenced Taseer's murderer in spite of receiving death threats, has fled the country. Aasia Bibi is rotting away in jail, reportedly in solitary confinement and in acute psychological distress. Shahbaz Taseer, the Governor's son, was abducted in late August — presumably by Qadri's sympathisers. He remains untraceable. Shahbaz Bhatti, the only Christian member of Parliament and another vocal voice against the blasphemy law, was assassinated weeks later on March 2.

Spontaneous celebrations

Political assassinations occur everywhere. But the Pakistani public reaction to Taseer's assassination horrified the world. As the news hit the national media, spontaneous celebrations erupted in places; a murderous unrepentant mutineer had been instantly transformed into a national hero. Glib tongued television anchors sought to convince viewers that Taseer had brought ill unto himself. Religious political parties did not conceal their satisfaction, and the imam of Lahore's Badshahi Masjid declined the government's request to lead the funeral prayers. Rahman Malik, the Interior Minister, sought to curry favour with religious forces by declaring that, if need be, he would "kill a blasphemer with my own hands."

In psychological terms, the reaction of a substantial part of Pakistan's lawyers' community was still more disturbing. Once again, they made history. Earlier it had been for their Black Coat Revolution, apparently welcome evidence that Pakistani civil society was well and thriving. But this time it was for something far less positive. Television screens around the world showed the nauseating spectacle of hundreds of lawyers feting a murderer, showering rose petals upon him, and pledging to defend him pro-bono.

Another phalanx of lawyers, headed by Khawaja Asif, former Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court, rose up to constitute Qadri's

defence team. In his court testimony, a smugly defiant assassin declared that he had executed Allah's will. Justice Asif agreed, saying that Qadri had "merely done his duty as a security guard". He said it was actually Taseer who had broken the law of the land by attempting to defend a person convicted of blasphemy and, in doing so, had "hurt the feelings of crores of Muslims."

Equally tragic incidents

Taseer's was a high profile episode, but there are countless other equally tragic ones which receive little public attention. Surely it is time to reflect on what makes so many Pakistanis disposed towards celebrating murder, lawlessness, and intolerance. To understand the kind of psychological conditioning that has turned us into nasty brutes, cruel both to ourselves and to others, I suggest that the reader sample some of the Friday khutbas (sermons) delivered across the country's estimated 250,000 mosques.

It is surely impossible to hear all khutbas, but a few hundred ones have been recorded on tape by researchers, transcribed into Urdu, translated into English, and categorised by subject at www.mashalbooks.org. Since there was no conscious bias in selecting the mosques, they can be reasonably assumed to be representative examples.

Abusive language

Often using abusive language, the mullahs excoriate their enemies: America, India, Israel, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Shias, and Qadianis. Before appreciative crowds, they breathe fire against the enemies of Islam and modernity. Music is

condemned to be evil, together with life insurance and bank interest. In frenzied speeches they put women at the centre of all ills, demand that they be confined to the home, covered in purdah, and forbidden to use lipstick or go to beauty parlours.

But the harshest words are reserved for the countless "deviant" Muslims. Governor Taseer was considered one. The former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, is another. In a foul-mouthed speech that the reader can hear on the above website, Qureshi is denounced as "haramzada" by Maulana Altafur Rehman Shah of Muhammadi Masjid in Gujrat and described as a "keeper [mujaawar] of graves". Quoting Nawa-e-Waqt, this maulana of the Ahl-e-Hadith school calls Qureshi a lap dog who stands with his "cheek on the cheek of Hillary Clinton." What, he asks, could be a matter of greater shame? Parliamentarian Jamshed Dasti, also accused of grave worship, is harshly condemned for being unable to name the first five verses of the Holy Quran.

One presumes that most listeners have enough intelligence to ignore such violent fulminations. But at times their effects are deadly. One such sermon, according to Qadri's recorded testimony, was the turning point for him. He had heard a fiery cleric, Qari Haneef, at a religious gathering in his neighbourhood, Colonel Yousuf Colony, on 31 December 2010. It is then, says Qadri, that he made up his mind to kill his boss. Qadri had participated in the gathering in his official uniform, reciting the naat in praise of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). His official gun had been slung around his shoulder at the meeting. Four days later, he fulfilled his goal.

Pakistanis who still believe in the liberal dream must also grapple with their past. Qadri is not the first one celebrated for killing a blasphemer. The 19-year-old illiterate who killed Raj Pal, the publisher of the book Rangeela Rasool, subsequently executed by the British, was held in the highest esteem by the founders of Pakistan, Muhammad Iqbal and Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Jinnah had been Ghazi Ilm Din's lawyer. It is reported that Iqbal, regarded as Islam's pre-eminent 20th century philosopher, placed the body in the grave with tears in his eyes and said: "This young man left us, the educated men, behind." Ilm Din is venerated by a mausoleum over his grave in Lahore.

Blasphemy unites

In today's Pakistan, blasphemy unites diverse warring sects. Significantly, Qadri is a Bareilvi Muslim belonging to the Dawat-e-Islami, which is part of the Sunni Tehreek. They are supposedly anti-Taliban moderates — one of their leaders, Maulana Sarfaraz Naeemi, was blown up by a Taliban suicide bomber in June 2009 after he spoke out against suicide bombings. Yet, 500 clerics of this faith supported Qadri in a joint declaration. They said that those who sympathised with Taseer deserved similar punishment. Today, on the blasphemy issue, these "moderates" have joined hands with those who seek to kill them. Jointly they rule Pakistan's streets today, while a cowardly and morally bankrupt government cringes and caves in to their every demand.

This is a modified version (as published in The Hindu) of his article that appeared in the Pakistani daily Express Tribune

Where ants drove out elephants

Stan Swamy

Displacement is painful for anybody. To leave the place where one was born and brought up, the house that one built with one's own labour can be even more painful. Even more, when no alternate resettlement has been worked out and one has nowhere to go, it is most painful. And when it comes to the Indigenous Adivasi People for whom their land is not just an economic commodity but a source of spiritual sustenance, it can be heart-rending.

A very conservative estimate indicates that during the last 50 years approximately 2 crore 13 lakh people have been displaced in the country owing to big projects such as mines, dams, industries, wild-life sanctuaries, field firing range etc. Of this, at least 40%, approximating 85 lakhs, are Indigenous Adivasi People. Of all the displaced, only one-fourth have been resettled. The remaining were given some cash compensation arbitrarily fixed by local administration and then neatly forgotten.

Independent studies done during the mid-1990s reveal that in Jharkhand about 15 lakh persons have been displaced and about 15 lakh acres of land alienated from mainly Adivasi people. Needless to say, during the last 15 years lot more displacement of people and alienation of land have taken place. Strange but true, rehabilitation of the displaced was never taken seriously by any government during all these six decades when the process of industrialization for 'national development' has been in vogue. In

fact there was no rehabilitation policy at all!

MOU-signing spree after the creation of Jharkhand

The real reason for the creation of Jharkhand as a separate state in November 2000 was not so much to respect and honour the long cherished wish and struggle of the indigenous people to govern themselves as per their culture & traditions but in view of opening up the vast mineral resources to national & international mining companies whose pressure was increasingly brought to bear on the govt. Quite understandably, one MOU after another were signed between the state government and various companies without any reference or consultation or consent of the mainly Adivasi people in whose land all this natural wealth is stored. Legal safeguards meant to protect Adivasi land from being alienated to non-Adivasis such as The Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (1908), The Santal Parganas Tenancy Act (1949), the Constitutional provisions through the Vth Schedule, The Provisions (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (1996), some significant Supreme Court judgments such as The Samata Judgment (1997) were and continue to be neatly ignored by the central & state governments in generously awarding vast tracts of land to industrialists at their asking. Over hundred such MOUs were signed during 2001 and 2010. Rough estimates indicate that about 1.4 lakh acres of land have been signed off. A cruel betrayal of the Adivasi

people for whom land is not just an economic commodity but a source of spiritual/cultural sustenance.

Enough is enough . . .

In a span of three to four years the Jharkhandi people began to realize that the central & state governments were not for people's welfare but that they were laying steps to sell off people's land, their water & forest resources together with all the mineral riches to corporate houses. They decided to act. Wherever projects together with land requirements were announced people mobilized and organized themselves and said a definite 'no' to the government and companies. People's Resistance Movements Against Displacement sprang up in different parts of Jharkhand from 2004 onwards. Even as people stood together in the form of micro-resistance movements, the industrialists, local administration, police, lower judiciary, most of print & electronic media and the urban middle class joined forces. They began to sing the song of 'development' and accused the people's resistance movements as 'anti-development'. The police started to harass the leaders of people's movements as 'obstructing government work' and as having extremist leanings. It is this situation which brought together activists leading anti-displacement struggles, some socially concerned intellectuals, a few members of the media, a few folk artists, some journalists. After a series of discussions & reflections it was decided to bring together the various

anti-displacement movements under some umbrella organizations so as to strengthen people's struggles and to express support & solidarity to each other. Three to four such macro bodies emerged. Public meetings, rallies, advocacy, press conferences were held to educate and motivate the people in struggle. It was made very clear that these anti-displacement movements will not enter into any dialogue with the government or the company to discuss rehabilitation facilities for particular projects since it would imply that people accept to be displaced.

By 2009 it became clear that companies are not making any inroads in Jharkhand in terms of acquiring land and setting up their industries whereas they are ready with their large investments and latest technology and the only thing they want is land. The corporate houses then started to exert pressure on the central & state governments to take some drastic steps by which this stalemate could be put an end to.

Operation Green Hunt . . . meant to hunt out the people and clear their green fields & forests to give to mining companies. A new philosophy was created to the effect that development is not taking place in the tribal belt of central India because of the 'menace of Naxalism' and if the Naxals/Maoists can be eliminated, the government will undertake systematic development programmes and the tribal population will catch up in the developmental process. Hundreds of police and CRPF jawans were sent into the villages of the so-called "red zone". They did not have the guts to go deep into the jungles and confront the naxals. Instead they gave vent to their frustration on the

helpless innocent village folk. They harassed them, beat them up, ransacked their houses, humiliated the elderly, dis-honoured the women, arrested or shot any young person. They were not accountable to any civil authority. The peaceful life of village communities was shattered.

Protests against state repression by human rights & civic rights groups started in good earnest. During 2010 public meetings, rallies, advocacy work condemning state action against its own citizens were conducted. At the same time, resistance to displacement was also strengthened. The end result was despite the state coming down so heavily on them, the indigenous Adivasi / moolvasi people steadfastly refused to part with their land for the industrialists. Out of the about one hundred MOUs signed by Jharkhand government with industrialists, hardly three or four companies have succeeded in acquiring some land, set up their industries and start partial production. This too they did by dividing local communities, enticing them with false promises or threatening them by using hired hooligans. Most significantly, the big companies which asked for hundreds and thousands of acres of land were turned away empty handed. This is indeed a heroic achievement of the poorest of the poor against the mighty industrialist giants.

'Operation Anaconda'! brought in a change of strategy in the state's war against the Adivasi people. It was unleashed in August 2011. Anaconda, the huge serpent of the Amazon basin in Latin America, was the code name. A thickly forested area by name of 'Saranda' in Singhbhum district which had been under the influence of CPI (Maoists), was chosen as a fore-

warning of things to come. So now on it will not be a hunt spread out over a large area but pin point smaller compact areas as "terrorist affected" and swipe the Adivasi people out even as Anaconda swipes everything on its way.

Thousands of police and paramilitary forces were brought in from the different parts of the country to do the swiping operation. Even the names of these battalions ("Greyhounds", "Cobras", "Scorpions") were supposed to evoke a sense of fright among people. They were mostly outsiders who did not know the culture, language of the Adivasi people and they did not have any sympathy towards the simple village people. Their achievement during these months was three villagers dead, three in death bed, several houses destroyed and granaries incinerated. They swept through village after village, destroyed the straw roofs, drove the people out of their homes, burnt their clothes, valuables, stole their money and killed their cattle.

This cruel action of the state was brought to light and condemned by human rights activists, artists, leftist political parties, press & electronic media. An appeal was made to the National Human Rights commission which was good enough to respond and made its investigation although its final report is still awaited.

The central & state governments have gone into face-saving exercise, ended the infamous Operation Anaconda, offered some monetary relief to the victims and is now speaking of developing Saranda-villages with top bureaucrats in command.

The end result of this cruel exercise on people is that the

Jharkhand government has allotted iron-ore to 19 steel companies.

At the same time, the Adivasi people who have nothing to lose but the chains of state repression, will continue to resist displacement and land alienation.

Where lies the future...?

Three apparent possibilities :

1. The "red corridor" is also the mineral corridor. The state, through its war on people, may clear the mineral rich land from the indigenous Adivasi and hand it over to mining corporates on a platter. The people will be driven out of their ancestral land and forced to settle down in the slums of towns & cities and eke out a living as casual and contract labour. They will lose their Adivasi identity, their culture, their language, their communitarian character. The extermination of the indigenous Adivasi will be complete.

2. Flocking to join the Maoist militants as the sole alternative. This is a real possibility insofar as the bourgeois state is bending over backwards to oblige the corporates rather than fulfill its constitutional obligations towards its own people, particularly the indigenous Adivasi people who have been the most exploited and oppressed all through India's independent history. It is this state which has scant regard for those constitutional & legal provisions and some judicial interventions which have sought to protect and safeguard the interests of the indigenous peoples of India.

Is there any wonder then the Adivasi youth constitute 99% of Maoists in Jharkhand and neighbouring states?

3. Drop the gun and start talking to Maoist militants. This is still a possibility if people who cherish the cause of justice will rise up to the occasion. Writers, poets, artists, media persons, human rights activists/defenders, trade/labour union activists, cultural activists, each using their own forums, can surely highlight the inhumanity in the state's war on poorest of the poor. Justice-oriented legal professionals can well initiate legal action against the state for its violations of

constitutional and legal provisions to protect the rights of the indigenous people. Advocacy work can be done with well-disposed legislators, parliamentarians, political parties. Christian churches, whose 90% membership consists of indigenous people in the tribal belt of central India, should surely raise their voice against the unjust displacement of Adivasi people and alienation of Adivasi land.

In short, It is time to stand up and be counted.

(Continued from Page 10)

21st century we are fighting among ourselves on the basis of religion, language, caste, region and so on. Our country is highly diverse, in fact bewilderingly diverse and to create unity in such diversity we have to strive very hard and need persons like Ghalib with their progressive and liberal values.

Urdu in which Ghalib wrote itself is a language of composite culture; it is product of several languages and dialects and Urdu is eminently qualified to express such progressive poetry as Ghalib composed. Urdu has been the language of love, not of hatred. Even today its ghazal poetry keeps millions spellbound even if they do not speak that language.

Ghalib, through his poetry, raised it to new heights. Iqbal described him as Goethe of Urdu. It is because of Ghalib's poetry that Urdu poetry can be compared with the highs of world poetry. Ghalib represents beautifully the tension between tradition and modernity. He describes it as conflict between Ka'ba and Kalisa (church), Ka'ba representing tradition and Kalisa modernity. It is this tension which

troubles Ghalib in the backdrop of 1857 war of independence which makes his poetry all the more relevant to us.

Here we are not saying that Ghalib alone deserves Bharat Ratna. Poets like Subramaniam Bharti and others too are proud heritage of our country and they too must be given this award. These poets, writers and philosophers have made all of us proud and our country great. We shall ever be indebted to them. In fact their greatness is our greatness. There is nothing wrong in extending the scope of this award to the period with which our encounter with modernity began.

Let us not think that we are begging for award for Ghalib, we are only reminding the Government of India and drawing their attention to the great sons of modern India who also eminently deserve to be honoured and in honouring them we will honour ourselves. It is not the Bharat Ratna which will make these great sons of India great but it will certainly make us great in honouring them. Justice Markandey Katju's suggestion eminently deserves country's attention.

Homeless

At least 3 million homeless people across the country are having to sleep outdoors in the bitter winter this year and state governments have done scant little to provide shelters for them, the Supreme Court commissioners have said in their 'National Report on Homelessness'.

They noted that all 15 states studied were in partial or complete violation of SC orders to set up permanent shelters for the homeless before the onset of winter.

Delhi, ironically one of the better performers, was required to set up 129 permanent shelters for the homeless but only 64 have come up even as peak winter is here. Of these, only 41 were permanent in nature and 21 were found shut. One such shelter was just not to be found though it existed on paper.

The commissioners said, "The 21 shelters are underutilized and in majority cases locked. Homeless are not aware of those shelters. Shelters are located in places which are too difficult to identify. The occupied shelters are only for men and no separate space for women in those. The basic amenities provided in the shelters are very poor."

The states - Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh - showed average level of compliance with the court orders, building 30-60 percent of

the required shelters. Ten states put up only 20-30 percent of the shelters required to house the poor. These include Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand.

Two states, the court commissioners said, which showed willful disobedience of the court orders and not set up even 20 percent of their targeted shelters were Maharashtra and West Bengal. In both the states, no functional shelters exist till date.

Apathy towards the homeless seems to be worst in the big cities. In Greater Mumbai, when the local corporation tried to start a shelter, the local Shiv Sena MLA objected to it. While Maharashtra claimed it would build 27 shelters in 15 cities by October 31, 2011, not a single shelter is in operation. In Kolkata, the state government claimed two running shelters existed and three more were being renovated. But the study found none operational. Worse, in Howrah, homeless families were actually evicted from a running shelter. Chennai, on the other hand, is doing better with 12 functional shelters though these too have their attendant problems.

In a scathing comment against the state governments, the commissioners said, "There are no reasons or excuses that the poor performing states could give out for such delays. Two years have elapsed now since the court first directed the states; one winter has

given way to another and to another; monsoons have come and gone by... In this period, the Supreme Court has reviewed the case on more than 10 occasions and has periodically guided the governments with support from office of the commissioners of the Supreme Court to ensure implementation of the SC directions."

The commissioners said that even where the shelters existed, in many cases the most basic facilities were not there. A place for women was a rarity and concerns of sanitation were ignored. In the biting cold, there are shelters across the country which do not even provide a polythene sheet and people sleep on cold bare ground in many. There are shelters which have been opened in cremation grounds (Kanpur) or outside the city limits.

The commissioners noted that the Centre too had failed in formulating a policy to provide for the homeless in the country. The only scheme it once ran for the homeless was whittled down and then wound up in 2005. It was so badly managed and funded that it flopped. "The overall financial envelope of the scheme was very restricted - during the period of the scheme, a total of Rs 8 crore was used for 114 projects throughout the country with 17,000 beds in the period of the scheme," the commissioners said.

— *The Times of India*



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Vol. 67 No. 1
January 29, 2012

Reforms and Reforms
 Pannalal Surana

Coup or Conspiracy
 Kuldeep Nayar

**Will French Socialists
 win in April ?**
 D. K. Giri

**Towards a more participatory
 responsible Budget**

**Agriculture and
 Indian Budget**

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
 Naushir Bharucha Marg,
 Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

What price intolerance?

S. Viswam

India may have to pay a heavy price eventually for permitting bigotry and intolerance to have a sway over sobriety and tolerance. If episodes like the one that has just been enacted at the Jaipur Literary Festival are permitted to be tolerated and repeated, Indian secularism and the country's fabled reputation for religious tolerance and understanding will be the prime casualty. Already enough damage has been done to the cherished ideal of secularism and enough violence has been done to the Indian Constitution which is a document exemplifying all noble thoughts on human rights and human conduct. It is not a simple matter of one writer and author, and that too a citizen of Indian origin, being prevented from participating in a literary festival. All those involved in managing the security of the Jaipur festival, the Centre, the Rajasthan government headed by Congress leader Ashok Gehlot, the Rajasthan police, and the Congress party as well as all the political parties represented in the national parliament have been found guilty of failure to uphold their constitutional responsibilities. In the process, they have dealt a death blow to Indian democracy itself. The "organised" conspiracy to keep Salman Rushdie away from Jaipur, in which the chief minister of Rajasthan played a major role, has made all the supporters, practitioners and well-wishers of secularism and religious tolerance hang their heads in shame. That Gehlot should have indulged in double speak—first asserting that full-scale security had been provided to the festival and then conveying to the Centre his apprehension of violence—was inspired by the need to safeguard the Congress party's electoral interests in Uttar Pradesh is yet another matter of shame. It would have required just a small section of the 70,000 strong Rajasthan police to ensure the security and safety of Salman Rushdie in case he had chosen to come and address the festival. Yet, this small obligation was abandoned by the chief minister who yielded to the unreasonable demands of a Muslim organisation to ensure that the distinguished author and writer did not make it to Jaipur. It is even more heart-breaking to see that the entire political leadership of this country turned its face away from Jaipur and willingly and meekly permitted India's cherished ideals to be trampled upon. Indeed, so baneful has been the conduct of India's politicians in maintaining silence in the face of blatant bigotry that Salman Rushdie is owed a collective apology by the entire nation. Not only because he is a citizen of Indian origin, not also because he is a writer and author, but solely because he is a human

being and should be allowed a free entry at any time of his choosing into the country. We have all dishonoured ourselves by keeping silent when religious bigots and communalists perpetrated a crime. India owes him a debt and it must be willing to repay the debt always. Leave aside the shameful episode in Jaipur, how is it that where matters of religious tolerance and intolerance are

concerned, India refuses to learn any lessons? India refuses to learn the prime lesson that Hindu communalism is as abhorrent as Muslim communalism, and that the communalism of the majority as well as of the minority is to be fought with equal determination. Majority communalism ensured that artist M.F.Husain was forced to flee his country and live in exile. Now

minority communalism has triumphed to the extent of denying Salman Rushdie his inherent and democratic right to participate in the Jaipur festival. To call India a democracy in which secularism finds a place of pride and honour will be, sad to say, a travesty of truth.

Reforms and Reforms

Pannalal Surana

For the last seven months or so, after the elections to the five State Assemblies in which the left were defeated, to be precise, the corporate lobby has reinforced its clamor for second and third generation reforms. (What that means is not spelled out anywhere or by anybody coherently.) They have been asking for steps to be taken which will attract more and more foreign capital in India. Cry for allowing FDI in Retail was a part of the campaign.

The Central Government had announced allowing 51 percent FDI in multi-brand retail and 100 percent in single-brand retail while the Parliament was in session - but outside it. Announcing a policy decision not in Parliament while in session but outside it was highly objectionable. One wonders whether the leaders of the ruling party are themselves not aware of the norms of propriety - or are unable to prevail upon the erring ministers? Proper and meaningful functioning of democracy requires all the functionaries to observe such norms.

The opposition to the official declaration was more vociferous on

substantive grounds. Allowing FDI in retail trade even in the cities having more than ten lakh population is bound to cause more unemployment than the new jobs created for obvious reasons. It is not that retail trade is nonexistent in mega cities.

There are traditional shops and also modern departmental stores, some run by the renowned corporate houses, when new entrants will enter, some of the old ones will be forced to downsize their workforce. Inviting foreign capital in fields like power generation where we may be lacking in the quantum of capital required or even technology is perhaps understandable. That is not the case with retail trade. For generations, we have been carrying on that profession. There is enough capital invested in it. And if need be, that can be augmented with our indigenous resources. About technology, if there is some deficiency in services like packaging etc. efforts can be made to update all that.

The Government had to bow down to such weighty arguments and unified opposition and the proposal

was deferred till an overall consensus on the issue evolves.

The Parliament closed its session. And, in the second week of January, the Government announced that notification has been issued to allow 100 percent FDI in single-brand retail trade. Why? Who did the string-pulling? And why the Government yielded?

In defense of the decision, it is said that it will pave the way for bigger flow of foreign capital which had been contracted considerably in the last few months. It is also said that, because of the downward trend in share market, FDI dealers have withdrawn large amounts. It is feared that some NRIs may follow suit. There is bad news on the foreign trade front. As our exports are sluggish, the gap in the balance of payment is likely to widen. Foreign reserves are also dwindling. To be able to make payments for our exports, and also for repayment of loans by some businessmen who had borrowed from some foreign banks, we must put in great efforts to enhance inflow of foreign money. Hence, the opening of retail to FDI.

(Continued on Page 4)

Between the lines

Coup or Conspiracy

Kuldip Nayar

As the dust over an attempted coup or conspiracy in Bangladesh settles down, it is confirmed that the Indian intelligence agencies warned army top brass at Dhaka about the conspiracy hatched against the Sheikh Hasina government. On this occasion, the Bangladesh army acted in time and nipped the defiance in the bud.

In 1975 too when Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib-ur Rehman and his 15 family members were killed by the army, the Indian intelligence had cautioned an attack on Mujib. But then the top brass were themselves in the midst of coup and the army deliberately did not act. The result is known to all.

That the Bangladesh army is not interested in taking over the country was clear when it gave back power to the civil authority in 2008 and held free and fair elections which returned Sheikh Hasina with a three-fourths majority in parliament. When the army was backing the caretaker government and cleansing the stable, it found the top politicians of both Sheikh Hasina's Awami League and Khalida Zia's Nationalist Bangladesh Party involved in corruption. Many in the army were worried that the revival of political process would bring in its wake the same old graft. Yet the army preferred the civil rule and bowed to the prerogative of the people to have their representatives in power.

Things are not what the electorate expected and the administration has been found wanting in many respects. Corruption and nepotism are back

with a vengeance. Yet it is the people who have to fight against such evils. The army cannot do the job because this is the difference between democracy and dictatorship.

"Instigated by some non-resident Bangladeshis, a band of fanatic retired and serving officers led a failed attempt to thwart the democratic system by creating anarchy in the army, banking on others' religious zeal," said the army statement, adding that "such heinous attempts are being foiled." The army further said: "Some officers in active military service involved in a conspiracy to topple the system of democratic governance through the army." A top army officer has been kept under investigation and another officer, Major Syed Mohamad Zia-ul Haq, is absconding.

It is apparent that the coup was attempted by a few elements representing religious fanaticism and the disgruntled army officers. The fundamentalists are unhappy because they have been firmly suppressed by the Hasina government which is liberal and secular. Yet there are other forces which are inimical to India and they resort to all kind of methods to foul the atmosphere. That was also the case when Sheikh Mujib-ur Rehman was killed. He too did not show any quarter to the extremists and the forces that were unhappy over the creation of Bangladesh. Sheikh Hasina has regretted that the Islamists have penetrated the army. It is ominous because this is what has happened in Pakistan as well.

My information is that the coup leaders this time were helped by forces operating from India. The rump of ULFA was there and so were the hostile Nagas. The Manipur insurgents were also part of the conspiracy. It is strange that while Bangladesh does not allow any anti-India forces to operate from its soil, as it used to happen in the past, India is lethargic and inactive.

For the larger picture, New Delhi must share the blame. It fails to have connectivity with Dhaka. Promises made in the fields of trade, power and business have remained unfulfilled. Sheikh Hasina has done so much unilaterally to foster good relations that there are many people in Bangladesh who are resentful. Yet bureaucrats at Delhi are not allowing the implementation of what Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had signed with the Bangladesh Prime Minister in terms of trade, power and money. Bureaucrats are not anti-Bangladesh but they represent the red tape which retards progress of any plan or project. Much-needed over-bridges that New Delhi was supposed to build in Dhaka are not even on the drawing board.

I recall when Bangladesh broke away from Pakistan Delhi made a five-year plan which would dovetail Dhaka's economic projects with those of India. It was an undertaking to develop the region on the whole. The Sheikh reminded New Delhi many a time but there was little follow-up. The only alibi that New Delhi had was the denial of facilities to India to reach its northeastern

states through Bangladesh. Sheikh Hasina gave even this concession long ago.

The failed coup is not only a warning but also an opportunity for the government at New Delhi. It must take some bold steps quickly to prove it to the people in Bangladesh disillusioned with Sheikh Hasina's government that India remains friendly and will go to any limit to help Bangladesh in its needs and, at the same time, foster still closer relations with Dhaka. But yet no step towards such an understanding is forthcoming.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh transferred a few tracts of land in Assam to Bangladesh, its rightful owner. He should bring the constitutional amendment in the next session of parliament to make what is de facto as de jure. The BJP and some elements in Assam are opposed to the transfer. But they must realize that this is the territory which belongs to Bangladesh and has stayed wrongly with India for some 40 years. One recurring complaint of Dhaka is that border police is cruel to any Bangladeshis who even strays into India by mistake. Television channels have shown recently how the border police was beating a boy mercilessly because he had crossed the border by mistake.

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee would be well advised to visit Bangladesh where she is popular and where the expectation is that she would make amends for her absence from the Prime Minister's team that visited Dhaka a few weeks ago. Were Mamata to announce more water from the River Teesta, something she had promised, the entire Bangladesh population would dance to her tune. She should tear a leaf from the book

of former West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu who accommodated Bangladesh on Farakka barrage water.

Sheikh Hasina has undertaken a stupendous job of punishing those who not only opposed the birth of Bangladesh but also sided with the forces that were indulging in anti-national activities against the people

(Continued from Page 2)

Strange logic, to say the least. Our exports, for the last two decades, that is when the new, free trade policy has been adopted, were always lagging behind our imports. The situation in the USA and EU is worsening for the last four years (bursting of financial bubbles in the former) resulting in fall in demand for our textiles, readymade garments, jewelry, IT, etc. That situation is not likely to improve in the near future. The prices of oil, which is a sizeable component of our imports are also increasing day-by-day. It is pinching more because the value of rupee is falling.

Under such circumstances, the wise course would be to cut down imports, particularly of oil by curtailing its consumption. Every sector of our economy needs to be disciplined. Instead of following the common sense, the rulers are surrendering to the whimsical demands of the corporate sector. It is puzzling as to why our captains of industry are pleading the case for FDI in retail on the ground that it may improve packaging services. Are our businessmen so bankrupt that they cannot improve such small matters? It is wrong on the part the Government to bow down before the Corporate who do not own any responsibility. When the prices of cement and other manufactured

during the war. The atrocities were untold and many bright young men and women were killed in cold blood by the killers or the elements that had supported the attempted coup against her. When the army says in a written statement after that happening that "such heinous attempts are being foiled," means that she has faced similar situations before. This is a point for concern.

articles started rising and when the then Finance Minister, P. Chidambaram was beseeching those industrialists to bring down those to a bearable level, the latter arrogantly refused to listen. Business class is most irresponsible. The Government should not shirk their responsibility which they owe to the Aam Admi.

Highlights of the Report of criminal, financial and other background details of contesting candidates of Punjab :

61 candidates out of the 408 candidates analyzed with self-declared pending criminal cases against them are contesting the Punjab 2012 Assembly Elections.

Out of these 61 candidates, 22 candidates have declared serious pending criminal cases such as murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, robbery, etc. against them.

All major parties have given tickets to candidates with pending criminal cases - INC has 23 out of 116 (20 percent), SAD has 18 out of 93 (19 percent), BSP has 9 out of 61 (15 percent), PPP has 7 out of 89 (8 percent)

A total of 266 candidates out of 408 analyzed i.e. 65 percent are crorepatis. In the Assembly Elections of 2007, a total of 184 candidates out of 462 analyzed (40 percent) were crorepatis.

Out of 408 candidates only 29 (7 percent) candidates are women; the number of women candidates for INC is 10 out of 116 (9 percent), for SAD it is 10 out of 83 (12 percent), for PPP it is 4 out of 89 (4 percent), for BSP it is 2 out of 61 (3 percent) and for BJP it is 2 out of 21 (10 percent).

Towards a more participatory and socially responsible Budget

*Slightly abridged excerpts from the memorandum submitted to
Pranab Mukherjee, Union Minister of Finance by National Alliance of People's Movements*

This year we have completed two decades of the declared Economic Reforms in country. Even though there is growing unemployment, declining agricultural and industrial production, rising inflation, economic crisis and inequality as never before even then there is a sense of celebration amongst a minority. That minority is celebrating and playing the fact that India can achieve a double digit economic growth. The obsession with the economic growth has taken over every other social concern and concerns about a declining developmental state. In the past twenty years, if a tiny minority has seen an explosion of choices of luxury and consumer goods then there is a vast majority, nearly 80 percent of the population lives on less than Rs 20/- a day.

In order to include this population and the process of budget making which in turn is related to planning development using natural and human resources and prioritizing in the favour of needy and deprived it is necessary that Article 243 is fully followed, making the states enact laws and planning from community (Gram Sabha and Basti Sabha onwards). This should be based on communities' right to resources and planning which can be legitimised through a Development Planning Act. Next budget, therefore, should reflect such bottom up processes and plans. This is particularly important in the context of the fact that malnourishment, hunger and inequitable distribution of income and development benefits continue to

infest the country which is showing increasing percentage of GDP and growth but exhibiting growing injustice making it stay at 134th in the HDI. The budget can answer these inequities to great extent if the Constitutional Article 39 C is strictly followed.

Garibi Rekha Nahi, Amiri Rekha

Any attempt at the remaking of a budget would mean more fundamental changes at policy levels and a different approach to economy which will take us towards a more socially responsive, just and equal society. The expanding inequality forces us to rethink and demand a 'Amiri Rekha' rather than a 'Garibi Rekha'. Based on this our taxation system need to change as the elite in India corner a large chunk of the benefits that the system provides. The system of direct taxation on income makes middle classes believe that they have a larger claim to the services but the fact remains that indirect taxes paid by everyone contribute the maximum, which has a wider coverage. However, indirect taxes raise prices, all other things being otherwise unchanged. They lower the real value of the earnings of the non-proprietors. Only the rich benefit since they have to pay much less of direct taxes. By raising the inflationary pressures indirect taxes have resulted in demands for subsidies in fertilisers, exports and food grains.

Incomes of the top 5 percent in the urban sector and 1 percent in the

rural sector, who would also be above *Amiri Rekha*, need to be tapped through direct taxes. There is a need to move away from the present structure of a high share of indirect taxes in the tax revenue to a high share of direct taxes. Today, the collections from the wealth taxes are meagre and in fact have remained stagnant over the years now. To make income from work more desirable than that from mere inheritance, the property of those above the *Amiri Rekha* should be taxed and the direct and indirect tax burden on everyone else should be removed.

It is a worrisome sign that today 77 percent of our Ministers (59 out of 77) and more than 300 MPs are crorepaties based on their declarations to the Prime Minister's Office and to the Election Commission. The average asset value of a minister's assets in the current ministry is Rs. 10,63,55,097 (Rs 10.6 crores). In 2009, the average asset value of a minister was Rs 7.3 Cr. This is not a healthy sign for Indian polity and democracy. This means many currents of thought do not find expression in our present political system and therefore in the Parliament. The political process is representing the power structure and reinforcing it; in the Parliament they only have formal representation. Neo-liberal reforms and policies illustrate the face of the non-representativeness of the parliament.

Comparing the situation then there is greater hunger, poverty, agrarian

crisis of unprecedented dimensions causing number of farmers to commit suicides and a financial crisis hinged on volatile multinational capital. It is now universally accepted that the 'benefits' of growth have been appropriated by an infinitely small privileged sections of the Indian society. However, instead of learning any worthwhile lessons from the imminent collapse of the neo-liberal 'reformist' programme (in the sense of moving further away from the declared and desired outcomes), this very failure is being used to push for more policies favouring big capital – both national and international (favouring both big capitalist conglomerates and highly capital intensive technologies).

One of the principal goals of the policies need to be universal employment in a short time frame, which can't and need not be limited to manual labour through NREGS. This would mean changes not only in economic policies but changes in many other policies and shifting our priorities as a nation. We will need to increase expenditure on social sectors, rural infrastructure, small scale sector, improved purchasing power of the poor, etc. We also need to force the elite to move away from speculative activities and futures trading to productive activities and contribute to the all round development of the nation. The elite should prosper through the prosperity of the nation and not at its expense, as it does today through the black money and inflation.

With the reductions in indirect taxes on basic goods, the cost of inputs into agriculture will decline and farmers will have a greater

quality of life. Increased expenditure in social sectors will help enhance the living conditions of the populace. Reduced speculative activities in real estate and lower land prices in rural and semi-urban areas would lead to enhanced access to housing for the bottom 80 percent of the population in these areas. They would not have to be in squatters, living in various shades of illegality.

Reduction in waste by the top 3 percent of the population would release a vast quantity of resources for the other 97 percent. This would go a long way in improving the conditions by preserving forests, biomass, rivers, and mineral resources, by reducing displacement.

But more importantly, the whole focus on planning need to be bottom up from the Gram Sabha in villages and Basti Sabha in urban centres and our Budget has to reflect this reality.

External Debts

We are also concerned about the fact that India has a huge loans and liabilities from multilateral donors like World Bank, ADB and other IFIs and an equally huge amount is paid towards payment of interests and commitment charges. If the government that has no money for a universal PDS or even an enhanced one and is moving towards a dangerous course of cash coupons, then the huge external debt and waiver of corporate taxes is a serious cause of concern. By government's own admission the daily average net per capita availability of food grain for the five year period 2005-09 is actually lower than it was in 1955-59 — half-a-century ago - this has to be addressed.

External debt (as per MoF, in reply to RTI questions, Aug 2011)

(INR Crore)

Institution	2009-10	2010-11
World Bank,	17979	23757
ADB	4036	5584
JICA ¹	11151	2557

Details of interest payable for such loans contracted from 2009-11 are:

(INR Crore)

Institution	2009-10	2010-11
World bank,	25.03	78.10
ADB	0.31	5.23
JICA	0.00	0.00

External outstanding Debt (to all bilateral and multilaterals) as on 31st March 2011 on Government Account was USD 69,990.324 Million (Rs. 3,49,950 crores).

Rs. 27.28 crore and Rs. 18.63 crore have been paid to World Bank (IBRD) towards commitment charges (for not utilizing the sanctioned loan) for the year 2009-2010 and 2010-11

The parliament has a right to know about these transactions and so our citizens.

Corporate Tax Waivers

We would also like to reproduce below an excerpt from an essay of P Sainath, on the waiver of corporate tax. This is something which we feel government urgently need to address. Since, increased spending on the social sector schemes is not undertaken due to lack of funds but corporates are being given such huge waivers.

Parts of an article by P. Sainath on 2011-12 budget, as appeared in *The Hindu*, dated March 7, 2011:

“A staggering Rs. 88,263 crore tax waiver was given to the CEOs of the country in the 2011-12 Union budget. An increase of 155 per cent from 2005-2006, when the tax waiver was for Rs.34,618 crore. In six years from 2005-06, the Government of India wrote off corporate income tax worth Rs.3,74,937 crore — more than twice the 2G fraud — in successive Union budgets. In 2011-12 budget, while writing off this gigantic sum for corporates, slashes thousands of crores from agriculture. As R. Ramakumar of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) points out, the revenue expenditure on that sector “is to fall in absolute terms by Rs.5,568 crore. Within agriculture, the largest fall is to be in crop husbandry, with an absolute cut of Rs.4,477 crore.”. If we add to this corporate *karza maaf*, revenue foregone in customs and excise duty— also very largely benefiting the corporate world and better off sections of society — the amounts are stunning. Try diamonds and gold. This accounts for the largest chunk of all customs revenue foregone in the current budget. That is, for Rs.48,798 crore. Or well over half of what it takes to run a universal PDS system each year. In three years preceding this one, the customs write-off on gold, diamonds and jewellery totalled Rs.95,675 crore. Total revenue foregone on customs duty in the 2011-12 budget: Rs.1,74,418 crore. Revenue foregone on account of excise duty in 2011-12 budget: Rs.1,98,291 crore. Clearly more than the highest estimate of the 2G scam losses. (The preceding year:

Rs.1,69,121 crore). How much does revenue foregone under corporate income tax, excise and customs duty add up to across the years? Budget figures for six years starting 2005-06, when the total was Rs.2,29,108 crore. budget where it is more than double that sum at Rs.4,60,972 crore. Add up the figures since 2005-06 and the grand total is Rs.21,25,023 crore. Or close to half a trillion U.S.

dollars. That is not merely 12 times the 2G scam losses. It is equal to or bigger than the Rs.21 lakh crore sum that Global Financial Integrity tells us has been siphoned out of this country and illegally stashed away in foreign banks since 1948 (\$ 462 billion). Only, this loot has happened in six years starting 2005-06. The current budget figure for these three heads is 101 per cent higher than it was in 2005-06.”

Revenue foregone under corporate income tax, excise and customs

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	Total revenue foregone to 2010-11	Percent increase 2010-11 over 2005-06
Corporate income tax	34618	50075	62199	66901	72881	88263	374937	155.0
Excise duty	66760	99690	87468	128293	169121	198291	749623	197.0
Customs duty	127730	123682	153593	225752	195288	174418	1000463	36.6
Grand Total	229108	273447	303260	420546	437290	460972	2125023	101.2

Education

Every school in the country should be a model school on the lines of common school system. Free Education should be given to all up to 18 years of age. At least 6 percent of the GDP should be allocated for the School Education.

is about 3.4 percent of GDP (as of 2008-09), which is way below the benchmark that had been recommended more than 40 years ago by the Kothari Commission Report.

In year 2010-11, allocation for model School Scheme had increased from Rs. 350 crore in 2009-10 to Rs. 425 crore in 2010-11. Then the allocation was increased by 16.1% in year 2011-12 based on revised estimates. But allocations for Sarva Siksha Abhiyan was Rs. 21,000 Crores based on the revised estimates which was 10.1 percent higher than earlier. But still the long-overdue promise of raising government spending on education to 6 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is yet to be fulfilled. At present, the country's total government spending on education

Hence, the Union Government needs to take adequate measures towards increasing the country's total budgetary spending on education significantly. It needs to be ensured that the Right to Education (RTE) Act actually delivers on its promise of providing free, compulsory and quality education to all children. In 2011-12 the total budget allocation for education was increased to Rs. 52,000 crore but the more was increased in the higher education sector and the government even invited foreign universities to establish their India Campus. Hence, there is need for straightening our priorities.

Health

The United Progressive Alliance government had made a commitment in 2004 to raise the country's total budgetary spending on health to 2-3 percent of GDP. However, even in 2009-10, India's total budgetary spending on health was only 1.06 percent of GDP. Hence, the Union Government needs to take adequate measures towards increasing the country's total budgetary spending on health significantly but with the aim to provide Universal Health Care (UHC) and not only provide incentives to promote the business of health and support medical tourism.

Our investment in the future generation depends on the adequate support to every child under six, who need be provided with adequate health, nutrition and pre-school education facilities. Schools and Health Care centres must have adequate number and variety of teachers and doctors, respectively. It is ironical that on one hand we have a huge unemployment problem and on the other shortage of teachers, doctors and other employees like the Village Development Officers, BDOs, etc., so crucial for development.

The Union Budget must try and achieve UHC with an aim to ensure equitable access for all Indian citizens, resident in any part of the country, regardless of income level, social status, gender, caste or religion, to affordable, accountable, appropriate health services of assured quality (promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative) as well as public health services addressing the wider determinants of health delivered to individuals and populations, with the

government being the guarantor and enabler, although not necessarily the only provider, of health and related services.

Housing, Employment and Social Security

Every year the Budgetary provisions to programmes under *Bharat Nirman*, which includes *Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY)*, Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme, *Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojna*, *Indira Awas Yojana*, National Rural Drinking Water Programme and Rural telephony. However, even then the total amount is not enough. The top down plan allocation continues to remain the problem, since the plan allocations are made at the level of Parliament and Legislative Assemblies but the actual implementation of these services and facilities are done at the local level by the lowest levels of bureaucracy and government institutions like Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayats and others who have no role in the overall plan for development. They are at the end of this chain and are given a limited amount of plan money to implement the already sanctioned amounts from top.

The fact that affordable urban and rural housing still remains a dream for many the Union Budget must make higher allocations for these and more so under the *Indira and Rajiv Awas Yojana*. It is needed to meet the shortage in rural housing as per the estimates provided by the Working Group on Rural Housing, which is 474.3 lakh (estimated for the plan period of 2007-12). Also, housing provided should be compliant with environmental and health standards.

The allocations under the NREGS continue to increase over last five years but to keep the wages lower than the minimum wages makes no sense. We demand that let there be a Optimum Wages for each sector which is linked to the calorie intake and be comparable with the income of the organised sector employees in the related class category. Minimum 315 Rupees per person per day in urban and Rs 250 in rural areas could be the starting point. Agricultural labour wages, for small farmers, should be paid through NREGS, till an equity is achieved between agricultural and industrial sector is achieved. The guarantee of wages should be to individuals and not to the entire family and should extend to all round the year.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour introduced the following social security schemes for the un-organised sector workers :

1. National Old Age Pension Scheme
2. National Family Benefit Scheme
3. National Maternity Benefit Scheme
4. Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana
5. Health Insurance Scheme for Handloom Weaver
6. Scheme for pension to Master Crafts persons
7. Group Accident Insurance Scheme for Active fishermen.
8. Saving-cum-Relief for the fishermen
9. Janshree Bima Yojana
10. Aam Admi Bima Yojana
11. Swasthya Bima Yojana.

But instead of implementing these schemes the Government of India in its budget in 2010-11 introduced the scheme of Swavalamban for the Unorganised sector workers which means to generate and save money for the future. But in the next budget of 2011-12. National Social Security Fund for unorganised sector workers proposed to be set up with an initial allocation of Rs. 1000 crore in 2010-

11 is nothing given the fact that they nearly contribute 65 percent to the total GDP. It should be at least Rs.30,000 Crore to start with as per the recommendation of the Parliamentary Standing Committee.

It is estimated by the Parliamentary Standing Committee that the workers in the unorganised sector constitute more than ninety-four per cent. of the total employment in the country. On account of their unorganised nature, these workers do not get adequate social security. Some welfare schemes are being implemented by the Central Government for specific groups of unorganised sector workers such as beedi workers, non-coal mine workers, cine workers, handloom weavers, fishermen, etc. State Governments are implementing welfare programmes for certain categories of unorganised sector workers and some Non-Government Organisations also provide social security to certain categories of workers. Despite all these efforts, there is a huge deficit in the coverage of the unorganised sector.

Agriculture

Agriculture should be given highest priority with preferably a separate budget. The difference between crop and non-crop agricultural loan should be abolished. The loan should be interest-free. In no case the interest should be more than 4 percent and it should be simple interest. Compound interest should not be applied in the case of farmers. The approval of wife should be necessary if a man is applying for loan. In fact the wife should be treated as head of the family, as is being proposed in the Food Security Act, for all schemes where family is

the beneficiary. Minimum support price should be replaced by profitable price which should be more than the investment by the farmer. The prices of fertilisers, seeds and diesel should be under control or subsidised. Farmers should be encouraged to shift to organic farming so that their dependence on market reduces. Adequate storage capacity in the form of godowns, preferably in every Gram Sabha, should be created so that food grains are not wasted and the farmer can sell when he/she feels it appropriate. Agriculture-based cottage industry should be encouraged to strengthen rural economy.

Allocations for National Agricultural Insurance Scheme was reduced to Rs. 950 crores in 2010-11 from Rs.1219 crores in 2009-10. In the year 2011-12 government allocation for Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana was increased from Rs. 6755 crore to Rs. 7860 crore. On the one hand government expects the agriculture sector to grow 5.4 percent in 2011 and on the other hand it acquires agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. Green Revolution to Eastern Region for Rs. 400 crore has been made. Allocation of Rs. 300 crore was made to promote pulses in villages in rain fed areas in 2011-12. Allocation of Rs. 300 crore was made for implementation of vegetable initiative to provide quality vegetable at competitive prices. Government has planned to promote organic farming methods combining modern technology with traditional farming practices. In 2010-11 Rs. 5.02 lakh crore was given as tax exemption to the industries and provided another Rs 1,38,921 crore as corporate and personal tax exemptions in 2011-12 but in agricultural sector only

extension of six months was given for loan repayment and interest rate of 4 percent for those who repay the loan in time. Since 2005-06, the total subsidy being showered on the industry and business sector amounts to a whopping Rs 16.45 lakh crore and the farmers in Vidarbha in Maharashtra and in many parts of Andhra Pradesh are committing suicide failing to repay the loan. Budget allocation should be made towards the dry land and rain fed agriculture lands.

For small and marginalised farmers simple and affordable loan system should be in place. Farmers should get compensation in cases of defective seeds. Traditional seeds should be encouraged rather than the seeds being sold by the MNCs. Government should buy the products from the farmers in adequate market rate

Food Security

Universalised PDS should be enacted to secure food security for all.

In 2010-11 food subsidy was reduced to Rs. 55,578 crore from Rs. 56,000 crore. But in 2011-12 the Government had launched National Mission for Protein Supplements with outlays of Rs. 300 crore. The Food Security Bill is still pending with the Government of India to be tabled. A provision of Rs. 300 crore was being made to promote higher production of nutri-cereals like Ragi, bajra to upgrade their processing technologies and create awareness regarding their health benefits. In 2009, the government had promised for National food security act and Universal ICDS by 2012 and 25 kgs of rice and wheat at Rs. 3 per kg for the BPL families.

No food coupons-cash transfer should be implemented in any form since that will encourage betrayal of the poor by the Market.

Community kitchens, on the line of 'langars' in Gurudwaras, should be encouraged especially from religious and public places to take care of problem of malnutrition as a supplement to the Government's Food Security Act. Food subsidy in the union budget should be increased significantly. Budgetary allocation for the village grain bank scheme should be increased.

Energy

The total budget allocation for energy sector was Rs. 1,26,225 crore in 2010-11 and Rs. 1,55,495 crore in 2011-12, where the allocation for atomic energy was Rs.7628 crore and Rs. 1,0012 crore respectively and for new and renewable energy the allocation was Rs.2492 crore and Rs. 2150cr respectively in year 2010-11 and 2011-12. National Clean Energy fund was still to be established. Instead of atomic energy, solar and other renewable energy forms should be strengthened through maximum allocation. Performance by the energy sector in terms of electricity generation has been very poor in the years 2005-06. Total utility capacity of the sector is high but has serious regional imbalances. The government has been abdicating its responsibility to adequately invest in power sector and relying more and more on private sector initiatives. The government should ensure adequate power supply at affordable prices to the consumers all over the country.

Even while we do realise the need to provide energy sources to the

whole country but the Integrated Energy Policy has miscalculated and exaggerated the energy requirements and as a result sanctions have been given to nearly 7,00,000 MW of electricity generation by now itself, whereas the total target projected by IEP is to have a capacity of 8,00,000 MW by 2032. This is taking away large chunk of financial allocation and putting a serious constraint on the natural resources of the country and is already causing environmental havoc and assault on the livelihood of millions of the farmers, dalits, adivasis, women and other nature resource based communities.

Water

It is internationally known and concluded by research that ground water and decentralised water harnessing and management gives best results through efficiency and need based distribution. However, India has continued to follow centralised (large dams and water projects), which is wasting financial resources and degrading catchments to land in the command. This should be given priority in the budget allocation. Planning Commission should be reviewing post facto, projects and schemes like AIBP as basis for further financial allocation in the water sector.

Defence and Internal Security

Every year the government spends around Rs. 90,000 crores of money on defence services which is nearly 2.5 percent of the GDP. But the fact remains that the money spent on the internal security remains even less than 1 percent of its GDP. If the responsibility of the government is to protect its citizens, then it simply needs to spend more on equipping,

training, and undertake adequate reforms to achieve greater efficacy and ensure that policing has a more humane face.

These are some of the brief suggestions to some of the sectors. In short:

- Most people live outside the budget and hence more than the Growth percentage social indicators, hunger index etc. should be the basis for planning the Budget. GDP was expected to grow by 9 percent but the actual growth is the 7 percent range. India escaped the worst effects of economic crisis of 2008 to the extent that it wasn't integrated into the world financial system
- If RBI can intervene to contain currency volatility why can't the Government intervene when basic food prices become volatile?
- No hiking of indirect taxes (that affect the poor) while giving direct tax concessions that benefit the better off. We need to start taxing the property and over a period of time do away with the indirect taxes. Export-dependent growth is not sustainable and self-reliance in food and other social sectors should be the target.
- Budgetary deficits need to be addressed but can't be sustained if the Government continues to give tax waivers and incentives to corporate sector and continues to undervalue the natural resources and mines and minerals of the country.
- Given the fact that the place of agriculture in GDP is falling there need to be a separate Agriculture Budget which preserves traditional seeds and knowledge, supports farmers with credit,

prices of their labour provides promotion of organic farming and industrial policy which doesn't promote land acquisitions of farm land.

- Our aim has to be Universal PDS as against direct cash subsidy combined with exemplary punitive action against hoarding, speculation and corruption in the PDS system as well as Universal Employment, Education and Health.
- No FDI in retail.
- Public transport need to be supported and incentives to auto industry should stop, it is not going to help us meet the challenge of climate change in years to come unless we start planning from now on. An economy based on the oil imports will have serious consequence on the social indicators and marginalised sections of the society will be the worst victims of this process.
- No tourism incentives – especially in tribal areas for the havoc they wreak (though it is a State subject).
- Indiscriminate disinvestment in profit-making PSUs must not be allowed as it is like deficit financing. In the name of industrial and infrastructural development we are pursuing a policy of privatisation. Public Private Partnership is only benefiting the corporations who are making huge profits. The 2G scam and many other scams are a result of these policies of indiscriminate privatisation and, therefore, policy corrections need to be made.

Medha Patkar, Sandeep Pandey, Swami Agnivesh, Arun Kumar, Roshan Lal Agarwal, Madhuresh, Anand Mazgaonkar, Geetha Ramakrishnan, Sunilam

Agriculture and Indian Budget 2012-13

Agriculture is the foundation of the rural economy which supports nearly 70 percent of our population and the basis of food security for the entire nation and its citizens. At this juncture, India is in a precarious situation both in terms of the economic condition of the farming community, especially the small and marginal farmers, tenant farmers and those dependent on rainfed agriculture, and the ecological condition in terms of poor soil health, abysmal groundwater situation, poor crop diversity and extent of chemical poisoning of our farm ecosystem and our food.

The budget should give the highest priority to strengthening Indian agriculture, with the focus on sustainable livelihoods, especially for the small, marginal and medium farmers, and agricultural workers who together constitute more than 90 percent of the farming community. The need of the day is for the nation's economic policies to focus on providing dignified livelihoods to these 700 million people and making agriculture and allied sectors economically vibrant and ecologically sustainable. Without this, the nation cannot hope to achieve poverty reduction or human development goals meaningfully – whether in the realm of food and nutrition security, health, rural employment, tribal development, Dalit empowerment or reducing the alarming rural-urban disparity.

Our immediate demands for the Indian budget are as follows, and we hope that this will mark a new beginning towards an economic policy focused on sustainable rural livelihoods.

- Public investment in agriculture is very low, with a large portion of it going towards subsidy for chemical fertilizers. As a sector which provides livelihood for about 60 percent of the population, at least 25 percent of the Indian budget should be allocated to agriculture and allied sectors.
- The prices for farmers' produce are not increasing commensurate with the rise in input costs and living costs. The Minimum Support Prices for the food crops are kept on a leash due to possible impact on food inflation. The National Farmers Commission recommended that farmers should be paid at least 1.5 times the Cost of Cultivation C2. The Government should set up the 'Price Compensation mechanism' which will directly pay the farmers the gap between the Target Price (C2+50 percent) and the MSP (or the average Farm Harvest Price if lower than MSP).
- Government should set up a Price Stabilisation Fund to address the market fluctuations in commercial crops
- Special program to support expansion of ecologically sustainable agriculture should be initiated by the government as a pilot in 100 districts, with at least 50 percent of these being in rainfed areas. This program should integrate ecological management of soil fertility, pest control, crop diversity, water conservation and livestock.
- Ecological Services bonus to farmers who practice ecological agriculture and cultivate eco-friendly crops like millets.
- A major mission should be taken

up to identify and record tenant farmers, and to provide them access to crop loans, insurance, compensation for crop loss, and all government subsidies and programs. Tenant farmers form the most vulnerable section of the agrarian community and constitute a majority of farmer suicides.

- A concerted program to update land records should be taken up in a time-bound manner, especially with a view of implementing land reforms and ensuring that the benefits of government programs and compensation for land acquisition reach the real cultivators.
- Drastic increase in outlay for Disaster Relief Fund for farmers, which should provide timely compensation for crop loss due to any disaster such as floods, drought, cyclone and untimely rains – at Rs.10,000 per acre on the lines of recommendations of the Hooda committee.
- Adequate crop insurance should be provided for all crops in all regions. Expanded outlay for crop insurance program should ensure doubling the number of farmers and acres covered during this year, and should subsidize the premium payments which have become unviable for many small farmers.
- Labour subsidy of 50 person-days/hectare for agricultural operations on private lands of farmers to compensate for the steep rise in labour wages. This should be in addition to the 100-day entitlement of labour work under NREGS and should be operationalized through a pilot program involving farmer and worker collectives.

(Continued on Page 15)

Will French Socialists win in April ?

D. K. Giri

Will French Socialist win in the presidential elections on 22 April? The last Socialist President was in 1995. Interestingly, Francois Mitterrand, the last Socialist President was the longest-serving President of France. He was charismatic, a skillful manager of the party affairs and innovative in development of policies. His legacy has been a tough act to emulate by his successors in the party. There were two Socialist candidates with very high credentials to become the President of France. But for two different reasons, both did not fight the elections. In 1995, Jacques Delors, who was the President of the powerful European Commission for three consecutive terms since 1985, was much ahead in the opinion polls. He was a popular Commission President who led the European integration process from the front. The European Political Union was conceived and achieved under his leadership. He bore the brunt of British euro-skepticism, when he was persuading the European leadership to accept federalism as the framework for European Union. He would have defeated either of the Conservative nominees, Jacques Chirac, the then Mayor of France or Édouard Balladur. But, as the French comrades say with sadness that Jacques Delors, suddenly, to everyone's surprise, announced in the national television that he would not contest for the presidency. The Socialists then fielded Lionel Jospin twice, in 1995 and 2002, but he lost. In 2007, Ségolène Royal became the socialist party candidate for the President. The French expected their first ever woman president, but

that was not to be. Ségolène Royal appeared to be passionate, but lacked in substance, style and experience. For the 2012 elections, French comrades were expecting Dominique Strauss Kahn to return from IMF to fight for the presidency. But in a bizarre incident, DSK, as he is popularly called, was accused of rape of a hotel maid. He was later on exempted of the charge, but he suffered too heavy a damage to his reputation to be nominated as a candidate to be President.

Leadership Contest in Reims

Following the defeat of Ségolène Royal in 2007 presidential elections, the party went into self-introspective mode. Every defeat anywhere puts the onus on the leadership. So the French Socialist Party also wanted to elect a new leader in place of François Hollande, who was the Party First Secretary for 11 years since 1997. Ségolène Royal, losing the election was living as his partner with François Hollande, so the demand for his head as the party leader was too much to handle. The leadership contest in Reims was very divisive. I happened to be in the Congress as an invitee, representing ADS, India. The excitement, confusion and competition in the conference were too obvious to miss. Although I followed the conference proceedings through interpreters, yet the tone and tenor of the speeches sounded passionate. Some 613 delegates and 860 members present there could not come to an agreement at Reims on 15 November 2008. It was put off until another date, 20 November, for

the party members to decide. In order to avoid further disunity, the Mayor of Paris, Bertrand Dalanoe withdrew from the contest. The outgoing Party Secretary François Hollande summed up the situation, "I take note of the fact that there was no majority today in the Socialist Party. It is a difficult moment." The Mayor of Lille, Martin Aubry emerged victorious on 20 November 2008 to be the party leader. I was quite impressed with both Martin Aubry and François Hollande, as they both made passionate and imaginative exposition of their thinking on French and international politics. Three years later, in October 2011, François Hollande was nominated by the party members to run for President in April this year.

The Party Leader

François Hollande is said to be a charismatic leader trying to emulate François Mitterrand. During the Reims Congress, Comrade Hollande seemed affable and endearing to delegates, to most of us who were there from abroad. He hosted a dinner to the foreign guests and mingled with everyone individually. Son of a doctor-cum-social worker, Hollande rose to political prominence rather quickly. Having graduated from Paris Institute of Political Studies, he became the special advisor to President Mitterrand in 1980s. Under Lionel Jospin, who was the leader of the party, the then Prime Minister of France, Hollande became the official spokesman, and as the First Secretary of the Party, he wielded so much influence that he was referred to as the Vice-Prime Minister. He did not seek re-election to be the First Secretary in 2008, following Royal's defeat; his leadership was largely blamed for the party's debacle in the polls.

However, just two years later, he bounced back to be party nominee for Presidential election. François Hollande is a brilliant orator and has number of books to his credit. Like his leader Mitterrand, Comrade Hollande can handle a controversy and build consensus. He did it successfully and catapulted himself to popularity when he rallied the party in 1995 behind Jacques Delors, who was the President of the European Commission. The party was sharply divided on who would succeed Mitterrand. But Delors renounced politics and the rest is history now.

Socialist Platform

The French politics has been polarized between the Left and the Right. The left wing politics is largely Social Democratic after Mitterrand absorbed the Communists in his government in 1981 and is reformist seeking to control neo-liberalism; as the right-wing is based on Gaullist ideology favouring social conservatism. Socialist Party is the main opposition party in France. The Socialist Party campaign will be based on 30 proposals concerning economy, taxation system, renewable energy, agriculture, immigration, focus on public services such as education, health care and security. The Party promises to tackle unemployment by creating jobs in the social and environment fields. The Party manifesto is yet to come out but these areas will be the guiding principles for detailed policies to be enunciated. The Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) which is the ruling party since 2002 is proposing the removal of 35 hour work week law but the Socialist Party which brought about this law, will oppose it. The Green Party which has always been strong on the European stage might cut into the

Socialist support base as it happened in Sweden and elsewhere. Given the challenge of climate change and the related problems Greens are attracting new supporters. What will be of course a challenge for Socialist Party is that of spelling out its response to the financial crisis affecting the EU, how the crisis affects the domestic policy, national debt, internal security and immigration, etc. The weaknesses of the euro-zone will dominate the policy options offered by the Presidential candidates.

Campaign Styles

These days, the elections are influenced by personality and performance in the media rather than political agendas of the candidates. The voters do not see much difference between the Right and the Left, only contrasting facades and posturing. The communication skills and styles of candidates and parties make a difference to great extent in such situations. The incumbent President Sarkozy came to the office with broad support but his popularity began to plummet just months into his Presidency. The French public, even his Right-wing supporters became wary of Sarkozy's nouveau riche life style. He could not keep his private life separate from his public exposure – be it the highly publicized Presidential divorce or his courtship and marriage to a former super model Carla Brunei. The French expect greater discretion from their political leaders. Likewise, François Hollande who lived for 30 years with Ségolène Royal and has four children with her separated after Royal lost the election. What is more, months after his separation, his affair with a French journalist came out in public domain which did not seem to go

down well with the French people. However, it is four years now and the exposure on his affair seems to have faded. Francois Hollande certainly scores over Sarkozy who, apart from his indiscrete personal life, faces a slew of corruption allegations from the people around him. The Bettencourt scandal which surfaced in 2010 has made a big dent on Sarkozy's promise to be a more ethical leader. The scandal went like this: Sarkozy gave 10 per cent tax cut to France's wealthiest people. This would have meant a billionaire like Liliane Bettencourt, the largest stakeholder in the L'Oreal cosmetics empire would be spared of her millions of euro as tax annually.

It later came out that Bettencourt had paid thousands of euro to Conservative politicians. Also, she made an illegal donation of 150,000 Euros in cash to Sarkozy's 2007 Presidential campaign. If Francois Hollande could exploit these scandals during the campaign then he is likely to land a terminal, fatal blow to Sarkozy's Presidential career.

As of now Francois Hollande is leading in the opinion polls. He is certainly a centre-left moderate face of the Socialist Party. Although he did not have any ministerial position, he has experience of many electoral battles and of governance by proxy. Election results are hard to predict

anywhere in the world although opinion polls do give some indication. By the law of average, the Right-wing UMP would find it hard to retain its winning position and it may be time for the Socialists to bounce back. This may set off a trend of Socialist resurgence in Europe; only recently in Denmark the Socialists came to lead the government. In Britain, the two younger leaders from Conservative and Liberal Parties outshone the popularity of Gordon Brown and came in coalition to form the government. So Social Democrat comrades in Europe are down but not out. Let us hope the French Socialists trigger their rebound in Europe.

Two Issues

Javed Anand

The Deobandis, Bareilvis (Raza Academy included) and the Owaisis are welcome to their view that Islam demands burning or a ban on offending words, and banishment of blasphemous authors. (Ideally, according to them, the likes of Salman Rushdie and Taslima Nasreen should be greeted with sticks and stones). But I have two issues to settle with them.

One, while they are entitled to their view, they must get used to the fact that India is a non-theocratic, secular country (Thank you, Allah, for granting such wisdom to the founding fathers of our republic) where there is punishment for crimes but none for "sins". If you are aggrieved, take recourse to Sections 153 A and 295 of the Indian Penal Code. Please remember that where "hurt religious sentiments" take precedence over the rule of law, human lives will be at stake. India is

a good example of a democracy-in-progress where governments (whether Congress or BJP) that fail to protect the freedom to write and paint also fail to protect human lives: Delhi 1984, Bombay (Mumbai now) 1992-93, Gujarat 2002. (Conversely, the literary and the artistic classes too should perhaps recognise that in a polity where human life itself is not held sacred, little else will.)

Two, as stated at the outset, I would have no quarrel with Muslims who subscribe to "their Islam" that prescribes burning, bans, banishment, even "virtuous murder" of the sinner so long as they refrain from instigating, preaching, precipitating violence. But then they should have no quarrels with other Muslims whose Islam is radically different from and staunchly opposed to fossilised faith.

Nearly 150 years ago, "Sir Syed",

founder of the Aligarh Muslim University, argued against book-burning and ban-seeking. In his biography, *Hayaat-e-Javed*, of the then reviled and now revered man, Maulana Altaf Hussain Hali approvingly wrote that Syed Ahmed Khan consistently held the view that words must only be fought with words. Khan would go out of his way to procure controversial writings. His advice to fellow Muslims: Must read anti-Islam, anti-Prophet literature. If the content is scurrilous, ignore them. However, if the criticisms are of a serious nature, the only option is to place your response in the marketplace of ideas. By burning books or demanding a ban, you only create the impression that Islam has no answers to offer.

That was then. Closer to our time, it's well to remember that though Salman Rushdie was severely criticised for what was seen as a

deliberate attempt to inflame Muslim sentiments, almost the entire Arab world opposed or ignored Ayatollah Khomeini's kill-Rushdie fatwa. Months after India had issued a ban on The Satanic Verses (the first country in the world to do so), at its March 1989 meet, the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) limited itself to a call to member states to ban the book.

Also significant is the case of Sudan's controversial Islamist, Dr Hasan 'Abd Allah al-Turabi. In an article published in the prestigious US journal, Foreign Affairs, in 1995, al-Turabi was quoted as saying: "I don't accept the condemnation of Salman Rushdie. If a Muslim wakes up in the morning and says he doesn't believe any more, that's his business. There has never been any question of inhibiting people's freedom to express any understanding of Islam".

Many Muslims across the globe today question the received wisdom on blasphemy, apostasy and heresy. Through much of Islamic history, all these were seen as inter-linked sins deserving of death. No doubt, the muftis and maulvis from Darul Uloom or wherever can cite the fatwas of numerous heavyweights from Islam's classical juristic tradition. But Muslims today who refuse to treat the learned Imams and Maulanas as omniscient (there can be no greater sin in Islam than this) and insist on seeing the fatwas in the context of their times, point to the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet himself in their support.

A good example is that of the UK-based Ziauddin Sardar of Pakistani origin whose recent book, Reading the Quran, should be

considered essential reading for all students of Islam. "I find the whole idea of blasphemy irrelevant to Islam," he argues. "If there is no compulsion in religion (a verse from the Quran says so categorically) then all opinions can be expressed freely, including those which cause offence to religious people. Of course, we, the believers, have the right to be offended. But we have no right to silence our critics".

Sardar laces his arguments in support of freedom of conscience and expression quoting verse after verse from the Quran and the life of the Prophet. "If the Prophet himself did not penalise those who uttered profanities against him, who are we to act on his behalf?" he asks. Good question. Who are we to act on behalf of the Prophet or on behalf of Allah, for that matter?

—*The Indian Express*

(Continued from Page 12)

- A rural livelihoods program should be introduced that focuses on agro-based processing, storage and marketing facilities to be set up in rural areas, managed by farmer collectives.

—**Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture (ASHA)**

Highlights of the report on criminal, financial and other details declared by candidates contesting the Uttarakhand Assembly Elections. Also attached in the analysis of asset increase of 53 re-contesting MLAs.

- Out of candidates analyzed, 53 candidates (i.e. 19 percent) have declared criminal cases against them. In 2007 assembly elections, 18 percent of candidates had declared criminal cases against themselves.
- Amongst major parties, every party has given tickets to candidates with pending criminal cases. INC has 16 out of 70 (i.e. 23 percent) candidates with pending criminal cases, BSP has 14 out of 70 (20 percent), BJP had 13 out of 70 (19 percent) and UKD(P) had 7 out of 44 (16 percent) candidates with pending criminal cases against them.
- Out of these 53 candidates with pending criminal cases, 14 candidates have pending serious criminal cases like extortion, theft, bribery and attempt to murder.
- A total of 88 candidates out of 278 analyzed (32 percent) are crorepatitis. In the 2007 assembly elections, only 11 percent candidates were crorepatitis.
- A total of 43 candidates out of 278 analyzed declared liabilities of more than 20 lakhs.
- Among major parties, the average asset of a candidate for BJP is Rs 1.45 crores and for INC it is Rs 1.46 crores, for BSP it is Rs 1.19 crore and for UKD(P) it is Rs 38.08 lakhs.
- 181 candidates out of 278 analyzed i.e. 65 percent are graduates or have higher educational qualifications.

Out of 788 candidates, only 62 candidates (i.e. 7.9 percent) are women; the number of women candidates for BJP is 6 out of 70 candidates (9 percent), for INC it is 8 out of 70 candidates (11 percent), for BSP it is 3 out of 70 candidates (4 percent) and for UKD(P) it is 3 out of 44 candidates (7 percent).

- No. of re-contesting MLAs analyzed in this report – 53
- The average assets of these MLAs as declared in 2007 is Rs 87,22,372 (87.22 lakhs)
- The average assets of these MLAs as declared in 2012 is Rs 1,79,52,563 (1.79 crore)
- Average asset growth for these re-contesting MLAs is Rs 92,30,190 (92.3 lakhs)
- Average percentage growth in assets for these MLA is 106 percent-

National Election Watch/Association for Democratic Reforms:



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

New Excelsior Building
3rd Floor, A.K. Nayak Marg,
Fort, Mumbai - 400 001

TEL: 91-22-2205 1231

FAX: 91-22-2205 1232

TELEGRAMS: "LOOMS" OR "DYNAMIC"

E-MAIL: gdho@vsnl.com

**CIVIL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS
MANUFACTURERS AND TRADERS**

GANNONS are specialists in:

Industrial Structures, Bridges (RCC and Prestressed Concrete), Thermal Power, Fertilizer, Chemical, Paper and Cement Plants, Public Health Engineering works, Piling Foundation & Foundation Engineering. **GANNONS** are also pioneers in Material Handling works, erection of Mechanical Equipments and Piping and supply of Textile Machinery and Light Engineering items.

BRANCHES AT

*** AHMEDABAD * COIMBATORE * HYDERABAD * KOLKATA
* MUMBAI * NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 67 No. 2
February 5, 2012

The Right to Say
Kuldip Nayar

Paradigm Shift in
US Political Parlance
Nitish Chakravarty

Why not 49 per cent FDI in
the Central Government ?
Banwari Lal Sharma

Socialism as a Way of Life
D.K Giri

Finland's School Success
Anu Partanen

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Bad times dog the UPA

S.Viswam

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is an institution that came into its own during the Indira Gandhi era, thanks to senior officers and advisers of the calibre of P.N.Haksar and G.Parthasarathi who were part of it directly or were associated with it. The political bureau of the government—the prime decision-making body in those times— comprised of the five senior most ministers who also coincidentally were in charge of important ministries like the home, finance, external affairs, and defence. During those crucial years when virtually all major decisions emanated from the PMO, the Prime Minister's authority and legitimacy was above question. Much waters have flowed down the Ganga and Jamuna since then, and today we are witness to the spectacle of the Supreme Court admonishing the officers manning the PMO for failure to advise the Prime Minister properly and in time on matters affecting governance. The highest court in the land has absolved the prime minister himself of any kind of guilt, but this by itself does not constitute a certificate of good conduct for Dr. Manmohan Singh. All said and done, the Prime Minister is expected to be a cut above other ministers and his officers and to command both fear and respect among them so that they are always

on their toes where official efficiency is concerned.

The Supreme Court's judgment of Tuesday in a case relating to the 2G scam is unflattering to the PMO. It virtually indicts the institution for failure to perform its duty of advising the Prime Minister correctly and in time. It holds the PMO directly responsible for the delay in placing an errant Cabinet Minister in the dock for his sins of omission and commission. It suggests that the Prime Minister was a victim of the failure of his own officers and advisers for keeping him in the dark about the happenings in the government.

The Prime Minister has drawn a lot of flak for not reining in the then Telecom Minister A. Raja. He merely passed on Subramanian Swamy's letter to him raising the issue of Raja's malafides, and remained inactive for 18 months even while the media was full of stories about how Raja was mishandling the spectrum allocations. In defence of the PM, the court has said that if Dr. Manmohan Singh had been apprised of the true factual and legal position, regarding Swamy's appeal, he would not have allowed the matter to linger for a period of more than a year. The result was that the minister A. Raja was allowed to get

away with his alleged misdeeds till it was too late. Raja was able to do much as he liked regardless of policy constraints and rules and regulations.

The indictment of the PMO is certainly a setback to the government. Indeed the entire judgment and its tenor and tone is none too complimentary to the establishment. However, some good has resulted from it also, in the sense that the Apex Court has laid down fresh guidelines on sanctions for prosecution. Firstly, the court has held that any citizen has a right to demand action against public servants suspected of corrupt actions. Second, there is no need to wait indefinitely for sanction from the concerned authority for prosecution of the concerned public servant. If nothing is heard from the authority for four months, the prosecution can be launched. The Court has rendered a distinct service by clarifying this issue because there are hundreds of cases where the sanctioning authority has remained unresponsive to appeals, thus ensuring that the corrupt officers remained untouched by law. The court has thus upheld the rationality of the demand raised by Team Anna that the requirement of sanctions be scrapped. All the versions of the Lokpal Bill have stressed this point.

The UPA government has been at the receiving end of a great deal of criticism for its recent administrative lapses. Over the months a trust deficit has built up between the PMO and the public at large, largely reflected in the public perception that Dr. Manmohan Singh has remained largely ineffective at the head of the government as he is the prisoner of other forces who have restricted his freedom of action. Hopefully even these forces will take due note of the implications of the Supreme Court's observations.

The Right to Say

Kuldip Nayar

HOW free is the media or, for that matter, how free is the right to express one-self? This is the question which has arisen in India after the three speeches, one by Vice-President Hamid Ansari, another by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and yet another by Justice Markandey Katju, chief of Press Council. The right to say has assumed all the more importance after Salman Rushdie's non-participation at the Jaipur Literary Festival because of threats. In Pune, screening of a documentary on Kashmir was stopped following protests by the students' wing of the BJP.

Talking of the first two speeches, both Vice-President and the Prime Minister have asked the media to introspect their role because of sensationalism that has crept into their dissemination. There was not even a hint of direct or indirect control of the media in their speeches. However, Justice Katju has warned the media that some regulation may have to be imposed as self-regulation is no regulation.

Since independence, New Delhi's record has been clean except when censorship was imposed during the Emergency (1975-77). Governments have followed Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru who assured the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference as back as on December 3, 1950: "I would have a completely free press with all the dangers involved in the wrong use of that freedom than a suppressed or regulated press."

Justice Katju appears to be on a different pitch. He should know that the Press Council was constituted to safeguard the press freedom. Unfortunately, his speeches reflect little understanding of the media's nitty-gritty or its culture. To dub journalists illiterate within a day of becoming the Press Council chief has only alienated him from them. Journalists do not qualify for the job with all the degrees if they do not write well, have no nose for news or lack analytical ability. S. Mulgaonkar, one of the leading editors that India has produced, was not even a graduate.

My worry is that the media is becoming a part of the establishment. In a free society, the press has a duty to inform the public without fear or favour. At times it is an unpleasant job, but it has to be performed because a free society is founded on free information. If the press were to publish only government handouts or official statements, there would be nothing to pinpoint lapses, deficiencies or mistakes. In fact, the truth is that the press is already too niminy-piminy, too nice, altogether too refined and too ready to leave out. Still the greater danger is that the profession is becoming an industry and tending to project views of the corporate sector.

Somehow those who occupy high positions labour under the belief that they—and they alone—know what the nation should be told and when. And they get annoyed if any news which they do not like appears in print. Their first attempt is to

contradict it and dub it mischievous. Later, when it is realized that a mere denial will not convince even the most gullible, a lame explanation is offered that things have not been put “in proper perspective.”

I served the first Press Council. Every member felt that the Press Council should be without teeth. It was founded as a body of peers who should judge peers. Justice Katju’s argument that it should have powers to penalize defeats the very purpose of the Council. It is not a court. There are already enough of them and one can be created for the media alone. But the purpose of constituting the Council is to leave it to the Council members—editors, journalists and proprietors—to decide how to improve the erring publication.

The slide began when the paper which the Council censured would not even publish the judgment against it. Even when the paper was told where it violated the ethics the paper concerned did not bother. I think it should be made obligatory for the papers to print the Council’s decision, however unfavourable.

Justice Katju should see the record of the Council which has been invariably an extension of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry. The Council was at its worst during the Emergency when the chairman was at the end of a telephone call by Information Minister V.C. Shukla who played havoc with the press. George Verghese was wrongly dismissed by The Hindustan Times but before the Council could give its verdict in his favour, it was abolished.

Even lately, the Council did not live up to its independent status. There

were many complaints against the press on what came to be recognized as “paid news.” News columns, considered sacrosanct, were used to campaign for a candidate who paid money. The Council’s original report had to be watered down because of the pressure exerted by proprietors of newspapers and television channels. Justice Katju’s warning against paid news is all right but he may find the Council itself divided on the subject.

As regards Salman Rushdie, he had to cancel his visit because of threat to his life. Probably, the government was equivocal in providing him security. But this is not the point. The democratic polity that India guarantees the freedom of speech. Some fundamentalists, who had taken umbrage against his book, *The Satanic Verses*, made the entire Muslim community a hostage. Liberal Muslims never speak out although they are vociferous in condemning Hindus on any act of omission or commission.

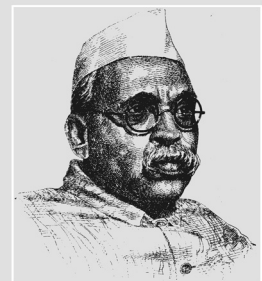
The Supreme Court has said: “The personal liberty of an individual is the most precious and prized right guaranteed under the constitution.” The Deoband seminary should realize if it has not so far, that in a secular society the constitution is above fatwa. M.F. Husain met more or less the same fate at the hands of Hindu fanatics. All such voices are marginal and do not represent the majority.

Free expression was violated at the Symbiosis College of Arts and Commerce which cancelled the screening of a documentary on Kashmir. The institute had received a notice from the Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) which objected to the screening of the documentary, calling it “separatist.”

The documentary—*Jashn-e-Azadi* by Sanjay Kak—spoke against the Army and in a way justified terrorists’ functioning in the Valley. (In protest, I am resigning from the position of Professor Emeritus in Journalism at Symbiosis).

No doubt, the space for free expression is shrinking all over the world. Yet I always thought that India would be an oasis in the desert of suppression and restriction on free expression. The fanatics and a weak government have proved me wrong. In Rushdie’s case, the UP election aggravated the problem because the state has nearly 15 per cent of Muslim electorate while the screening of Kashmir documentary had to be cancelled to placate the Hindutva crowd.

**Acharya Javadekar
A Satyagrahi Socialist**



G. P. Pradhan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

*D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir
Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W), Mumbai 400 007.*

Paradigm Shift in US Political Parlance

Nitish Chakravarty

The duel now being waged in the United States for choosing the Republican Party candidate in the contest for the nation's highest public office in November marks a paradigm shift. From being a platform for rambling talk on non-issues, the tug-of-war between the principal aspirants has turned into a nuanced debate on substantial issues. The debate is no longer about sartorial styles or the dietary choices of the aspirants for the office of President. The skin colour of a candidate is not an issue either. Never before have the virtues of capitalism, worshipped in the western world as an infallible model of economic growth and prosperity, been questioned so widely as now. The yardstick to measure social and ethical values in the American political system has changed so dramatically that it is no longer fashionable to characterise a candidate for President as a devotee of unalloyed capitalism. For many people in the younger generation of Americans the terms capitalism and capitalist have acquired a pejorative connotation. Seldom before has one heard in America that to be excessively wealthy – "filthy rich" – is not a virtue but a vice. Black money – though not the two words as such – has emerged as a sticking point in electoral parlance. In the perception of ordinary Americans their "leaders" do not have the people's interests at heart.

The issues raised at Mitt Romney's run-ins with American voters in the ongoing battle for the Republican Party ticket for President have caught widespread attention.

The enormous wealth in his family's possession has become somewhat of an embarrassment, if not a millstone. This seems to be something new in American culture, for getting rich, no matter the means, has been the driving force in American life. Yet Romney has been openly accused of constantly "not apologising" for "getting filthy rich by buying companies and putting them through a wood chipper", says The New York Times. Romney "squirms like a worm on a hook when someone points out his wealth" and his "non-apologies reek of guilt and shame", adds a commentator on public affairs. For weeks Romney resisted calls for a disclosure of what he and his wife earned and how much they gave to the tax collector. Romney's refrain in nomination rallies that the tax he paid was "very substantial" and that he had done nothing illegal "is just the kind of non-answer answer that makes people suspicious", says another analyst.

The public outcry over his income and tax returns was, however, too strong for Romney to resist for long and he was forced to make a disclosure. The tax returns that he put in the public domain last week showed that Mr Mitt Romney and Mrs Ann Romney between them made \$27 million in 2010. Their gross taxable income for the year was adjusted to \$21.6 million, and all they paid in taxes was \$3 million, that is about 13.9 per cent, which is no more than what someone earning about \$80,000 a year would pay in the U.S. Indians are familiar with another accusation that has been

laid at the Romneys' door – that the couple has stashed away millions of dollars in Swiss bank accounts and millions more in partnerships in the Cayman Islands, a tax haven. Trusts run by the Romney family sold thousands of shares of Goldman Sachs, arguably the world's biggest investment bank, that were offered to them as favoured clients when Goldman Sachs first went public. Far from squashing the accusation of being filthy rich, the tax returns have fuelled speculation that the Romneys have tweaked the law and evaded paying up millions of dollars in federal taxes.

The fresh air blowing through America contrasts starkly with the prejudices and predilections Barack Obama had to fight during the run-up to the presidential election in the autumn of 2008 and even after his historic win at the polls. Obama was a soft target not only because of the colour of his skin but on grounds of being a crony socialist, if not a full-blooded radical. To be a socialist was – and still is – an anathema to all those who worship the market economy, where government intervention is minimal and where everything is judged on the crucible of profit. But the deep recession which started in the last years of George W Bush's tenure at the White House, turning millions of Americans jobless and homeless and putting the economy in the reverse gear, seems to have awakened Americans to the inbuilt shortcomings and perils inherent in the so-called free market, where the political government is virtually without any regulatory power. The

wheel has turned a full circle; to speak up in favour of creating a level playing field for every citizen no longer raises eyebrows.

Many Americans have begun to realise that free enterprise is another name for making money – no matter what the means are – without any holds barred. The vulgarity of limitless profits has been exposed by a series of developments that have rocked America in the last couple of years. We have seen how men held in awe in the financial industry have one after another been hauled over the coals and found guilty by the courts for giving the laws of the land a short shrift in order to make illegal and obscene gains in the stock markets and hedge funds and in the multilayered home loan business. The recession that has reeled the American economy is the result as much of mismanagement at the governmental level as of deceit and fraud stalking the financial industry in the U.S. as well as the financial hubs in other parts of the globe. Recession has hit those countries the hardest where business tycoons are a law unto themselves. The powers that be in these countries have tried their utmost to save the skin of the capitalist class and pass on the effects of recession to people on the lower rungs of the economic ladder.

People are no longer willing to take lying down the fraudulent and deceitful ways of the business tycoons. So we have the phenomenon of Occupy Wall Street. The movement began less than five months ago to give vent to the pent up anger of the common people against the wrongdoing of bankers and others in the money business, and has already drawn support from across the spectrum. In spite of attempts by the administration

of many states to crush it, those committed to the Occupy Wall Street's ideals have not wavered. The "Occupy" movement now talks not only of lawmakers' hand-in-glove liaison with bankers and financial tycoons but has begun questioning the very legitimacy of the prevailing system of governance in the U.S. "All 'elected' officials bought their way into gerrymandered seats with Wall Street money", says the Occupy movement manifesto. In words rarely uttered before to denounce the system, "Occupy" says: "These bankers' henchmen have shown themselves both unwilling and unable to take on the tremendous, systemic issues in our country, our place in this world."

Here are some more quotes from statements issued by the "Occupy" leaders: "This is an illegitimate system. Around half of the nation's population doesn't participate in electoral politics. More than 6 million Americans who want to vote are disenfranchised, including the entire populace of the District of Columbia [Washington]. There is consensus that we are on the wrong track and that our 'leaders' do not have our interests at heart. In the face of this endemic corruption, the Occupy movement is about organising locally to discuss and change these problems from the ground up. We came to show the 1%'s Congress what democracy looks like. Our nation, and our world, is in crisis and our 'elected' officials have failed us. They refused to hold their bankrollers—Wall Street—responsible for the financial crimes that bankrupted our nation and destroyed the global economy. This last legislative cycle was the least productive in recorded U.S. history; 90 percent of the country disapproves of these 'elected'

officials. We refuse to accept the grim future that Wall Street's cronies have designed. We refuse to be the 1%'s captive citizenry. We stand together to show that the 99 percent creating a better world."

The changing perceptions of the American people are visible in the findings of recently conducted opinion polls. One such poll shows that 66 per cent Americans believe there are strong, if not very strong, conflicts between the rich and the poor, marking a 19 per cent change over the last two years in favour of those who share this view. Another important finding is that Americans care about a policy that gives everyone a fair shot. These findings have propelled Barack Obama's fight for a better deal for the aam admi. In his State of the Union message – his last in his current term – President Obama characterised the choice before the people as one between whether "a shrinking number of people do really well while a growing number of Americans barely get by." No jarring notes followed his remark: "You can call this class warfare if you want."

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on
Mumbai Bank
in favour of
JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai 400 007

Why not 49 per cent FDI in the Central Government ?

Banwari Lal Sharma

In this era of development through FDI, the latest news is the announcement of the new Minister of Civil Aviation Ajit Singh to allow 49 percent FDI in two Indian airlines companies - Air India and Indian Airlines Corporation. In his first act as minister, the farmers' leader and the son of a freedom fighter Charan Singh who always advocated Swadeshi economy, Ajit Singh says that his plan of introducing foreign hand in our companies is okayed by the finance minister and he will now put it before the Cabinet.

Once upon a time Air India was considered one of the best airlines in the world. People all over the world used to dream to get a chance of travelling in this airline with a hearty welcome by the Maharaja. The government took over it, allowed several private air companies in this business, many first-rate pilots of Air India migrated to other companies as they got lucrative offers. Bureaucratic mismanagement has come down to the state where both the corporates are running at heavy loss. One and only way the Central government knows is to invite FDI to solve the problem.

Insurance field in India is doing well. Life Insurance Corporation is one of the best insurance corporations in the world. The government is opening it for 49 percent FDI in spite of the fierce opposition of the insurance workers. In retail business more than 4 crore small and medium size establishments are feeding 20 to 25 crores of people. The Central government has allowed 100 percent FDI in the monobrand retail and

is determined to open multi-brand retail to 51 percent FDI though there is a fierce opposition to the government move. There is hardly any field of economy and society which has not been opened to FDI. Fields such as education, health, sanitation, transport, etc. are not spared from FDI.

The government, headed by a former World Bank employee, believes that growth is the key for development and growth is possible

only by FDI. FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) is in fact foreign direct involvement of foreign companies and firms who, as the government believes, not only bring capital but also latest technology and good management. If this is true, then there is a strong case for FDI. The Central government's performance is hopelessly poor. It has completely failed in checking high prices, unemployment, poverty and hunger. The Prime Minister declares that

(Continued on Page 13)

Violence Against Nuclear Power Plant Protestors

People's Union for Civil Liberties is shocked at the incidence of brutal violence, on 31-1-2012, at Tirunelveli, against people's representatives of PMANE (People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy), including twenty women, opposing the Koodankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP), by democratic and peaceful means, to preserve their right to life, livelihood and safe environment. The attack was reportedly carried out by local thugs, members of Hindu Munnani and the local Congress. It occurred just prior to a scheduled fourth meeting between representatives of PMANE and members of the Central Government Expert Panel on KKNPP.

What makes this attack particularly vile and reprehensible, is that it occurred in the premises of Tirunelveli Collectorate, while the collector was present in his chambers, and in presence of police force, thereby making both effectively complicit to this attack.

PUCL condemns all forms of violence, in particular, violence which scuttle democratic processes by the State, in a variety of ways, especially by the use of violence – direct, sponsored or tacitly supported.

PUCL demands strictest action to be taken against all individuals and groups charged with direct violence. Disciplinary action must also be taken against all police officers present, who, in a dereliction of duty, did not sufficiently safeguard PMANE members from physical harm against hooliganism on government premises. District Collector R Selvaraj, as the Chief Executive of the District Administration, must accept final responsibility for this grievous incidence, occurring within his jurisdiction and in his office premises.

**–Pushkar Raj
General Secretary**

Socialism as a Way of Life

D.K Giri

In the absence of a viable socialist party at the national level, people may wonder if socialism is relevant to India. Is it not that 'Congressism' is the best politics to stay in power'? That is what seems to have infected most parties and people who vote for them. Of course, people are not to blame. They do not find a credible alternative. In the wake of the decline of socialist forces in Europe, where they had been stronger than anywhere else in the world, the question may arise, if socialism is the ideology that can deliver the benefit to many, if not all. These questions are related to political parties which operate in complex and difficult electoral dynamics. But my intention in this article is to examine; if socialism can be a way of life, if we can embrace and practice socialism in our daily lives.

There are three dominant ways or forms of social organization: Conservative traditionalism, Liberal individualism and Socialist collectivism. These 'ideologies' embody alternative ways of looking at the society and the world. My proposition would be to argue that socialism, in whatever way it is understood in different contexts and countries, is the most credible and acceptable way to organize one's personal, social and political life. Its universal and perennial principles guide in ensuring a just, fair, progressive, and importantly, a stable society.

Understanding Socialism

Some time ago I read a book written by a British author who wrote that he had found 322

definitions of socialism in different languages. This was written in 1925 when only one country, Russia had declared itself as a "Soviet Socialist Republic". Since then 87 years have passed. During this period the idea of socialism has spread right across the globe. Now there are hundreds of parties, groups and movements in all parts of the world who are pledged to build socialist societies in their respective countries. These include from industrially highly developed countries in Europe to the least developed countries in Africa and Asia.

The problems and challenges of building up socialist society in all these countries differ radically, economically, politically, socially and culturally. They are placed at different levels of development and therefore, they would have to adopt different policies, strategies and tactics in order to bring about a radical transformation of their respective societies to bring them closer to socialist ideas and ideals. In order to be effective, they have to evolve their own policies keeping in mind not only the history and geography of their countries but also the stage of economic development, and immense diversities in terms of languages, religions and ethnicities which often created a lot of problems. Therefore, there are today not only widely different definitions of socialism but also diverse ways of moving societies towards socialist goals. Thus, it is not surprising that the word 'socialism' often creates a lot of confusion and controversy. To illustrate the point, in the first socialist republic in the world - the USSR or the Union

of Soviet Socialist Republic - the Marxist theory of 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' was practiced to build up a socialist society, the so-called 'lower stage of communism' - a transitional stage between capitalism and communism. In practice, it was the dictatorship of the soviet communist party. It had a total control over every aspect of society in that there was no room for any accepted form of civil liberties or democratic rights of the people.

Therefore, the question arose: Can there be socialism without democracy? In the late 19th century and early 20th century, socialism had the name of 'social democracy' which the Marxists had accepted. The biggest socialist party was the Social Democratic Party of Germany which happened to be a Marxist party. Social democracy or socialism meant the expansion of democracy, which was being introduced in some of the European countries, from political to the economic, social and cultural life. That was what socialism was about.

However, when the majority section of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks) under the leadership of Lenin seized power in Russia in 1917, a new element namely "Leninism" was added to the 'Marxism' which moved it away from its traditional social democratic ideas. A rigid form of dictatorship was introduced in order to build up a socialist society. It wore the birthmarks Czarist Russia with its suppression of civil liberties and democratic rights, restrictions on or suppression of political parties,

its all-powerful secret police and Siberian prison camps for political prisoners and so on.

In 1919, Lenin formed the Communist International to encourage, promote and strengthen the Leninist form of socialism throughout the world. Thus the international socialist movement was formally split into two: one section clinging on to social democracy of both Marxist and non-Marxist forms emphasizing that democracy and freedom should be the fundamental bases on which socialism has to be built, while, on the other hand, the Leninist communists argued that only the dictatorship of the proletariat, which, in practice, meant the communist party, was essential to build up a socialist society. The ideological arguments on the characteristics of a socialist system had gone between these two schools of thought for over eight decades. During this period the word 'democratic' socialism was introduced in order to differentiate democratic from the totalitarian form of socialism. This had gone on for nearly seventy four years till 1991 when the socialist society built up by Lenin and Stalin just collapsed! Russia, which was meant to move from its socialism towards communism, reverted back to the crassest form of private capitalism. Why and how this happened cannot be discussed here, but this actually happened to the utter surprise of all varieties of communists. In fact, the whole philosophical and ideological basis of Leninist-Stalinist form of socialism simply disintegrated. The collapse of Soviet Union occasioned the reevaluation and even redefinition of socialism.

Defining Socialism

Socialism has been understood in relation to means of production. In Europe, where socialism has been

most prominent through established political parties, it meant little more than an efficient administration of welfare capitalism in a controlled market economy. But what was conceived to be the essence of socialism was a fundamental reallocation of productive resources within an ethic of social solidarity. The dictionary meaning of socialism is, "political and economic theory of social organization which advocates that the community as a whole should own and control the means of production, distribution and exchange policy or practice based on this theory (Oxford).

Then Karl Marx gave a new meaning to socialism. He envisaged socialism to be a classless society, where each individual is to be attended to and cared for. He suggested the elimination of inequalities arising out of income, disparities in wealth or opportunities due to birth and inheritance. He was against exploitation of man by man, appropriation of the value of one's labour by another, etc. He also suggested that socialism could be achieved gradually through democratic means, not necessarily through a revolution, or dictatorship of proletariat in a transitional phase.

However, not only Leninism, even Marxism became impractical as it ignored many other social, and cultural variables in a country while predicting the 'scientific movement' of a society or country from "primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, socialism, and then finally to communism". The ownership and control over economy, the so-called 'economic determinism' was the means to attain socialist objectives. So the means became the essence of socialism. Thus, with the death of Marxism, 'scientific socialism' having been discredited

by Leninism and Stalinism, Social Democracy is the only form that survives. But, as said before, Social Democracy has had its ups and downs in party political form, and now is more defensive than ever in Europe. How far is it relevant in daily life of an individual and community? Can it be practiced in a de-politicized way' - in party terms? It certainly is possible if we look carefully at its two very interrelated cardinal principles - democracy and solidarity.

Democracy is the Key

For an individual to reach his/her potential and to lead a life of peace and security, freedom is absolutely essential; freedom of thought, choice and action is prerequisite for a decent life. Democracy is based on as well as ensures four freedoms-political, social, economic and cultural. Political democracy alone is not conducive for all round human development. Likewise, there is no choice between bread and liberty. Once both are available, human beings aspire for expressing their human instincts and skills through relationships, communities, art and culture - all these make human beings complete.

One creates different social, political and economic structures to ensure these freedoms. Political party is one such structure albeit the dominant one. Many people do not join a party for various reasons, but one can embrace democracy as a way of life, even outside the party forum. Democracy means not only respecting dissent, it means consultation and consensus building, which leads to collective wisdom. There is saying in Africa that "two minds are better than one". The process of consultation draws out the experience and wisdom of each, avoids conflicts and confrontation; as democracy is not always a

contested process. On dissent, it is not easy for people in higher positions to respect it as it involves ego, superiority complex and so on; but a good socialist should not look at the person, but the perspective. As socialist, one believes in equity of status, in a rankless society; this is brilliantly illustrated in a book by Robert Fuller, "All Rise- Some bodies, Nobodies, and the Politics of Dignity". A veteran socialist late Surendra Mohan once told me, "If you are not quarrelling with your wife, you are not a socialist". This statement made in a jocular way spoke a lot about women's status, and giving equal space to one's wife. So democracy is not just structural. It could be personal and a way of life.

The Spirit of Solidarity

All countries in the world are, in one way or the other, hierarchical societies. Solidarity is the best approach to build harmony and fellowship in common interest. We have structures for equality, and for justice, but not for solidarity. It is not a charity, but a necessity in order to avoid conflicts. To illustrate the practice, if you have an umbrella and another person is standing in the rain without one, you must invite the person to share it. In case you do not, the person will feel deprived and agitate in his (her) mind about why is this difference, if you do, you will feel good and avoid causing that sense of deprivation in the person. Solidarity is going beyond equality. In the French revolution, from which Socialism draws its philosophy, one principle was fraternity, but it is rarely practiced in political and economic fields. We do not have structures to enforce it. The absence of this practice, leads to rabid consumerism, individualism and rank selfishness, and has caused

(Continued on Page 13)

Finland's School Success

Anu Partanen

The Scandinavian country is an education superpower because it values equality more than excellence.

- Sergey Ivanov/Flickr

Everyone agrees the United States needs to improve its education system dramatically, but how? One of the hottest trends in education reform lately is looking at the stunning success of the West's reigning education superpower, Finland. Trouble is, when it comes to the lessons that Finnish schools have to offer, most of the discussion seems to be missing the point. The small Nordic country of Finland used to be known - if it was known for anything at all - as the home of Nokia, the mobile phone giant. But lately Finland has been attracting attention on global surveys of quality of life - Newsweek ranked it number one last year - and Finland's national education system has been receiving particular praise, because in recent years Finnish students have been turning in some of the highest test scores in the world. Finland's schools owe their newfound fame primarily to one study: the PISA survey, conducted every three years by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The survey compares 15-year-olds in different countries in reading, math, and science. Finland has ranked at or near the top in all three competencies on every survey since 2000, neck and neck with super achievers such as South Korea and Singapore. In the most recent survey in 2009 Finland slipped slightly, with students in Shanghai, China, taking the best scores, but

the Finns are still near the very top. Throughout the same period, the PISA performance of the United States has been middling, at best.

Compared with the stereotype of the East Asian model - long hours of exhaustive cramming and rote memorization - Finland's success is especially intriguing because Finnish schools assign less homework and engage children in more creative play. All this has led to a continuous stream of foreign delegations making the pilgrimage to Finland to visit schools and talk with the nation's education experts, and constant coverage in the worldwide media marveling at the Finnish miracle.

So there was considerable interest in a recent visit to the U.S. by one of the leading Finnish authorities on education reform, Pasi Sahlberg, director of the Finnish Ministry of Education's Center for International Mobility and author of the new book 'Finnish Lessons: What Can the World Learn from Educational Change in Finland?' Earlier this month, Sahlberg stopped by the Dwight School in New York City to speak with educators and students, and his visit received national media attention and generated much discussion.

And yet it wasn't clear that Sahlberg's message was actually getting through. As Sahlberg put it

to me later, there are certain things nobody in America really wants to talk about.

* * *

During the afternoon that Sahlberg spent at the Dwight School, a photographer from the New York Times jockeyed for position with Dan Rather's TV crew as Sahlberg participated in a roundtable chat with students. The subsequent article in the Times about the event would focus on Finland as an "intriguing school-reform model." Yet one of the most significant things Sahlberg said passed practically unnoticed. "Oh," he mentioned at one point, "and there are no private schools in Finland."

This notion may seem difficult for an American to digest, but it's true. Only a small number of independent schools exist in Finland, and even they are all publicly financed. None is allowed to charge tuition fees. There are no private universities, either. This means that practically every person in Finland attends public school, whether for pre-K or a Ph.D.

The irony of Sahlberg's making this comment during a talk at the Dwight School seemed obvious. Like many of America's best schools, Dwight is a private institution that costs high-school students upward of \$35,000 a year to attend - not to mention that Dwight, in particular, is run for profit, an increasing trend in the U.S. Yet no one in the room commented on Sahlberg's statement. I found this surprising. Sahlberg himself did not. Sahlberg knows what Americans like to talk about when it comes to education, because he's become their go-to guy in Finland. The son of two teachers, he grew up in a Finnish school. He taught mathematics and physics in

a junior high school in Helsinki, worked his way through a variety of positions in the Finnish Ministry of Education, and spent years as an education expert at the OECD, the World Bank, and other international organizations.

Now, in addition to his other duties, Sahlberg hosts about a hundred visits a year by foreign educators, including many Americans, who want to know the secret of Finland's success. Sahlberg's new book is partly an attempt to help answer the questions he always gets asked. From his point of view, Americans are consistently obsessed with certain questions: How can you keep track of students' performance if you don't test them constantly? How can you improve teaching if you have no accountability for bad teachers or merit pay for good teachers? How do you foster competition and engage the private sector? How do you provide school choice?

The answers Finland provides seem to run counter to just about everything America's school reformers are trying to do. For starters, Finland has no standardized tests. The only exception is what's called the National Matriculation Exam, which everyone takes at the end of a voluntary upper-secondary school, roughly the equivalent of American high school.

Instead, the public school system's teachers are trained to assess children in classrooms using independent tests they create themselves. All children receive a report card at the end of each semester, but these reports are based on individualized grading by each teacher.

Periodically, the Ministry of Education tracks national progress

by testing a few sample groups across a range of different schools. As for accountability of teachers and administrators, Sahlberg shrugs. "There's no word for accountability in Finnish," he later told an audience at the Teachers College of Columbia University. "Accountability is something that is left when responsibility has been subtracted."

For Sahlberg what matters is that in Finland all teachers and administrators are given prestige, decent pay, and a lot of responsibility. A master's degree is required to enter the profession, and teacher training programs are among the most selective professional schools in the country. If a teacher is bad, it is the principal's responsibility to notice and deal with it.

And while Americans love to talk about competition, Sahlberg points out that nothing makes Finns more uncomfortable. In his book Sahlberg quotes a line from Finnish writer named Samuli Puronen: "Real winners do not compete." It's hard to think of a more un-American idea, but when it comes to education, Finland's success shows that the Finnish attitude might have merits. There are no lists of best schools or teachers in Finland. The main driver of education policy is not competition between teachers and between schools, but cooperation.

Finally, in Finland, school choice is noticeably not a priority, nor is engaging the private sector at all. Which brings us back to the silence after Sahlberg's comment at the Dwight School that schools like Dwight don't exist in Finland.

"Here in America," Sahlberg said at the Teachers College, "parents

can choose to take their kids to private schools. It's the same idea of a marketplace that applies to, say, shops. Schools are a shop and parents can buy what ever they want. In Finland parents can also choose. But the options are all the same." Herein lay the real shocker. As Sahlberg continued, his core message emerged, whether or not anyone in his American audience heard it. Decades ago, when the Finnish school system was badly in need of reform, the goal of the program that Finland instituted, resulting in so much success today, was never excellence. It was equity.

* * *

Since the 1980s, the main driver of Finnish education policy has been the idea that every child should have exactly the same opportunity to learn, regardless of family background, income, or geographic location. Education has been seen first and foremost not as a way to produce star performers, but as an instrument to even out social inequality.

In the Finnish view, as Sahlberg describes it, this means that schools should be healthy, safe environments for children. This starts with the basics. Finland offers all pupils free school meals, easy access to health care, psychological counseling, and individualized student guidance.

In fact, since academic excellence wasn't a particular priority on the Finnish to-do list, when Finland's students scored so high on the first PISA survey in 2001, many Finns thought the results must be a mistake. But subsequent PISA tests confirmed that Finland - unlike, say, very similar countries such as Norway - was producing academic

excellence through its particular policy focus on equity.

That this point is almost always ignored or brushed aside in the U.S. seems especially poignant at the moment, after the financial crisis and Occupy Wall Street movement have brought the problems of inequality in America into such sharp focus. The chasm between those who can afford \$35,000 in tuition per child per year - or even just the price of a house in a good public school district - and the other "99 percent" is painfully plain to see.

* * *

Pasi Sahlberg goes out of his way to emphasize that his book *Finnish Lessons* is not meant as a how-to guide for fixing the education systems of other countries. All countries are different, and as many Americans point out, Finland is a small nation with a much more homogeneous population than the United States.

Yet Sahlberg doesn't think that questions of size or homogeneity should give Americans reason to dismiss the Finnish example. Finland is a relatively homogeneous country - as of 2010, just 4.6 percent of Finnish residents had been born in another country, compared with 12.7 percent in the United States. But the number of foreign-born residents in Finland doubled during the decade leading up to 2010, and the country didn't lose its edge in education. Immigrants tended to concentrate in certain areas, causing some schools to become much more mixed than others, yet there has not been much change in the remarkable lack of variation between Finnish schools in the PISA surveys across the same period.

Samuel Abrams, a visiting scholar at Columbia University's Teachers College, has addressed the effects of size and homogeneity on a nation's education performance by comparing Finland with another Nordic country: Norway. Like Finland, Norway is small and not especially diverse overall, but unlike Finland it has taken an approach to education that is more American than Finnish. The result?

Mediocre performance in the PISA survey. Educational policy, Abrams suggests, is probably more important to the success of a country's school system than the nation's size or ethnic makeup.

Indeed, Finland's population of 5.4 million can be compared to many an American state -- after all, most American education is managed at the state level. According to the Migration Policy Institute, a research organization in Washington, there were 18 states in the U.S. in 2010 with an identical or significantly smaller percentage of foreign-born residents than Finland.

What's more, despite their many differences, Finland and the U.S. have an educational goal in common. When Finnish policymakers decided to reform the country's education system in the 1970s, they did so because they realized that to be competitive, Finland couldn't rely on manufacturing or its scant natural resources and instead had to invest in a knowledge-based economy.

With America's manufacturing industries now in decline, the goal of educational policy in the U.S. - as articulated by most everyone from President Obama on down - is to preserve American competitiveness

by doing the same thing. Finland's experience suggests that to win at that game, a country has to prepare not just some of its population well, but all of its population well, for the new economy. To possess some of the best schools in the world might still not be good enough if there are children being left behind. Is that an impossible goal? Sahlberg says that while his book isn't meant to be a how-to manual, it is meant to be a "pamphlet of hope."

"When President Kennedy was making his appeal for advancing American science and technology by putting a man on the moon by the end of the 1960s, many said it couldn't be done," Sahlberg said during his visit to New York. "But he had a dream. Just like Martin Luther King a few years later had a dream. Those dreams came true. Finland's dream was that we want

(Continued on Page 13)

A Valliyammai in Odisha

In South Africa, when M K Gandhi was fighting for the rights of Indians, a law was passed declaring all marriages, except Christian, illegal. The children of all non-Christian parents had automatically become illegitimate. Gandhiji organised the people and protested against this black law. A Harijan teen ager named Valliyammai also participated in the struggle and received police brutalities. This Tamil girl later died while protecting Gandhiji from police bullets. Immediately after his return from South Africa, Gandhiji made it a point to visit this brave girl's village Thillaiyadi in Thanjavur dist. He termed his visit as a pilgrimage. A few journalists told Gandhi that he was the inspiration for the late Valliyammai. Gandhi dismissed that outrightly and told them that Valliyammai was his inspiration.

In Odisha, we have now a Thillaiyadi near Pipli and a Valliyammai by name Pabina. This poor but brave Dalit teen ager, an eye witness to the tragic rape of her friend in 2008, brushed aside all threats and allurements to fight for the cause of her late friend. But the culprits, with the blessings of a politician and the obliging administration, raped this girl about one and a half months ago and made her a vegetable. She is now fighting for her life in a Cuttack hospital. Anyone else in her position would have taken the easy option of forgetting the incident of 2008 and pursued the routine life. But not Pabina. I wish Pabina to get well soon and lead many more such heroic struggles in her life. I am extremely proud of Pabina and may her tribe multiply.

— Sankara Narayanan

A New Year Lament

Brij Khandelwal

All communication channels are blocked. In this vast ocean of indifference and apathy, ennui seems passable. You can not inter-act. You can't wake up people even if you blow horns at 500 decibels. While the lumpen parasites squeeze out the last drop from your vitals, you will keep tolerating because thou art an Indian, the land of Bhang eaters. With so much stink all around, why don't people just wake up and do something to change the world around them or have they been drained of all essential fluids. The conspiracy of silence suits the power mongers. Apathy is the ideology of the conservatives, hypocrisy the new religion of the lotus eaters. Common sense is selling

at a premium, logic and rationality have disappeared from the market. In this stifling atmosphere, a return to fundamentalism seems attractive to the spineless majority. This is the golden age of the dudes, the tantriks, the glib talkers, the dream peddlers, the presenters of rosy pictures of the other world, the travel agents of the heavenly journey.

Indian mass media has sold its soul to the devil. For advertisements and TRPs the media can and does often stoop to any depth. Is freedom of the press being used judiciously? Who will answer this question? Not the mandarins of the Indian fleet street. Utter lack of sensitivity by the Indian elite has been further bolstered by the protagonists of the global village.

Communication technologies are being used to propagate decadent values, strengthening the shackles of fundamentalism and promote all the baser instincts that dehumanise society. Degeneration of professional ethics is acceptable. "If X is compromising why shouldn't Y and Z?" The politicians say India is marching ahead. One would like to believe so. But the grim realities stare you in the face. Economic disparities have sharpened, crime rate is rocketing, essentials are becoming scarce and dearer, dirt and filth mounds are ubiquitous, women harassed and exploited, children are not safe, road accidents have increased and they say "Alls well down here oh Lord."

(Continued from Page 6)

it is the national shame that 42 percent children in the country are mal-nourished. It is the report of the government-appointed committee, headed by Arjun Sen Gupta that 77 percent people earn Rs 20/- or less per day. About 2.5 lakh farmers have committed suicides. The government had promised to bring Land Acquisition Bill 2011 in the last session of Parliament but failed to do so. Sometimes, the whole session of Parliament passes without doing any business.

The list of the governments' failures is very large. It is the unwritten policy of the government to hand over a field to foreign companies if it does not function properly. The field, ill-famous for its malfunctioning, is the Central government, and it is the fit case for FDI in it. It may be 49 percent of FDI but we suggest that unlike the usual practice of starting with 26 percent then increasing to 49 percent, 74 percent and finally 100 percent, the Central government needs 100 percent FDI.

(Continued from Page 9)

terrible conflicts, jealousies and so on. If we enjoy freedom, we should fight for those who do not have it. It is said, "No one is free until everybody is free". So in an integrated world, the spirit of solidarity should be the guiding principle. A social democrat ought to practice this in daily life.

(Continued from Page 12)

to have a good public education for every child regardless of where they go to school or what kind of families they come from, and many even in Finland said it couldn't be done."

Clearly, many were wrong. It is possible to create equality. And perhaps even more important - as a challenge to the American way of thinking about education reform - Finland's experience shows that it is possible to achieve excellence by focusing not on competition, but on cooperation, and not on choice, but on equity.

The problem facing education in America isn't the ethnic diversity of the population but the economic inequality of society, and this is precisely the problem that Finnish education reform addressed. More equity at home might just be what America needs to be more competitive abroad.

Bhupinder Singh Hooda,
Chief Minister, Haryana, Chandigarh

Jan 16, 2012

Sub: (Forced Land Acquisition for Gorakhpur Nuclear Power Plant, Fatehabad)

Dear Mr. Chief Minister,

It was with gravest concern and misgivings that We heard of Section 9 of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, being issued in Fatehabad, Haryana, to forcibly acquire land for the proposed Gorakhpur Nuclear Power Plant Project. This action by the Haryana State Government. is completely unacceptable on the following two counts:

Farmers of Gorakhpur and nearby villages have been sitting in continuous opposition to the proposed nuclear power plant from August 2010. They are fighting for their right to life, livelihood and to safeguarding their fertile and irrigated, three-crop land, all of which will be severely threatened if the project were passed. The fact that a community is in such a long drawn and strong opposition to the project is of crucial concern and cannot be ignored arbitrarily or repressed in democracy.

Further, a new Land Acquisition Bill draft is being considered currently by the standing committee in the Parliament. It would thus be presumptuous and premature of the Haryana State Government to push through forceful land acquisition, using the old act, before the parliament has an opportunity to pass the new Act.

We request you to immediately withdraw the land acquisition notice for the project, and as the head of your State, initiate dialogue with the protestors so that you may address their concerns without resorting to a draconian use of an ancient and unreasonable act.

Sincerely,

Dr. Arati Chokshi-Secretary PUCL Karnataka; Major General (RTD) S.G.Vombatkere - NAPM, Karnataka; Puskar Raj- General Secretary. PUC; Admiral, L. Ramdas (Former Chief of Navy Staff) CNDP; Lalita Ramdas-CNDP; Kamayani Bali Mahabal-Human Rights Activist, Mumbai; Sukla Sen-Ekta Mumbai and others

*With Best Compliments
From*



APNA BAZAR CO-OP.

MUMBAI KAMGAR MADHYAWARTI GRAHAK SAHAKARI SANSTHA MARYADIT
(Multi-State Consumer Co-operative Society)
Govindji Keni Road, Naigaon, Dadar (East), Mumbai-400 014.

MAIN CHARACTERISTIC

- 60 YEARS SERVICE IN CONSUMER SECTOR
- ONLY ONE MULTI-STATE CONSUMER CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY IN INDIA
- MORE THAN 40 RETAIL OUTLETS
- ANNUAL TURNOVER IS 100 CRORES
- 15 LACS LOYAL CUSTOMERS
- AWARD WINNER OF JAMNALAL BAJAJ UCHIT VYAVHAR [1989 & 2001]

➤ **HEALTH SERVICES**

- ★ DADA SARFARE AROGYA KENDRA - NAIGAON
- ★ H. N. PATIL AROGYA KENDRA - VASHI
- ★ FREE HEALTH CAMPS
- ★ MARKETING THE PRODUCTS OF SMALL PRODUCERS

APNA BAZAR FOR ALL

Highlights of the report on candidates

Out of the 337 candidates analyzed for the 2nd phase of Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections, 118 candidates or 35 percent declared criminal cases against them. In 2007 assembly elections for the whole of Uttar Pradesh, 28 percent candidates had declared criminal cases against themselves.

Among these 118 candidates, Mokhtar Ansari (Quami Ekta Dal, contesting from Mau and Ghosi constituency) has declared maximum number of criminal cases. He has declared 15 criminal cases including 9 serious IPCs. He is followed by Upendra (SP, Phephana constituency) and Javed Iqbal (BSP, Kushi Nagar constituency), who has declared 11 and 5 criminal cases respectively.

Amongst major parties, every party has given tickets to candidates who have declared criminal cases. SP has 30 out of 59 (51 percent), BSP has 23 out of 59 (39 percent), BJP has 20 out of 55 (36 percent), INC has 19 out of 59 (32 percent), Peace Party has 8 out of 35 (23 percent), JD(U) has 12 out of 50 (24 percent), candidates with declared criminal cases.

Out of these 55 (16 percent) have declared serious criminal cases like murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, robbery, extortion etc. BJP has 9, BSP has 10, SP has 12, Peace Party has 3, INC has 10, JD(U) has 7, Quami Ekta Dal has 2 and Apna Dal has 1 such candidates.

A total of 138 candidates out of 337 analyzed for the 2nd Phase i.e. 41 percent are crorepatis. In 2007, there were 22 percent crorepati candidates.

The candidates with maximum assets are Shah Alam of BSP from Mubarakpur constituency with assets worth 54.44 Crores followed by Subhash of SP from Saidpur with 35.32 Crores and Narendra Mani Tripathi of INC from Gorakhpur Urban constituency with assets worth 27.88 crores.

Six Candidates have declared assets less than 1 lakh.

A total of 10 candidates out of 337 analyzed declared liabilities of 70

Lakhs and above.

Among major parties, the average asset per candidate for SP is 2.13 Crores, For BSP is 3.38 Crores, for BJP is 1.24 Crores, For INC is 1.68 Crores, For Peace Party is 2.03 Crores, For JD (U) is 61.02 Lakhs, Quami Ekta Dal is 1.36 Crores and Apna Dal is 13.68 Lakhs.

212 out of 337 candidates analyzed i.e. 63 per cent are graduates or with higher educational qualifications.

Out of 1098 candidates contesting for 2nd phase of Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections 2012, only 76 (7 per cent) candidates are women; the number of women candidates for BSP is 2 (3 per cent) out of 59, for BJP it is 6 (11 per cent) out of 55, INC it is 8 (14 per cent) out of 59 and SP it is 5 (8 per cent) out of 59.

Number of re-contesting MLAs analyzed for 2nd phase of UP 2012 Assembly Elections— 34

The average asset of these MLAs as declared in 2007 is Rs 86,17,386 (86 lakhs).

The average asset of these MLAs as declared in 2012 was, Rs 2,47,58,021 (2.47 crore).

Average asset growth for these re-contesting MLAs is Rs 1, 61, 40,634 (1.61 crore).

Average percentage growth in assets for these MLA is 187 per cent.

Sarvesh Kumar Singh of BSP from Azamgarh has the highest increase in asset worth Rs.8.81 Crores, followed by Pramod of BSP from Deoria with an asset increase of Rs. 4.51 Crores and Rajkumar of BSP from Ghazipur constituency with an asset increase of Rs. 4.38 Crores.

The highest percentage increase (1934 per cent) has been for Umesh Pandey of BSP from Madhuban constituency. His assets rose from 5.58 lakhs in 2007 to 1.13 crores in 2012. He is followed by Madho Prasad of INC from Chauri-chaura constituency with a percentage increase of 1025 per cent (6.90 lakhs in 2007 to 77.62 lakhs in 2012) and Sarvesh Kumar Singh of BSP from Azamgarh constituency with an increase of 887 per cent (99.42

lakhs in 2007 to 9.81 crores in 2012). Highlights of the report on ITR and PAN details of contesting candidates (Phase 2)

Uma Shanker (BSP) has the highest annual income at Rs. 5.54 Crores followed by Shah Alam (BSP) at Rs. 1.03 Crores, Jetendra (BSP) at Rs. 1.02 Crores and Suresh (BSP) at Rs. 75.46 Lakhs as per their last filed Income Tax Returns.

A total of 166 candidates (49 per cent) out of the 337 candidates analyzed by the Uttar Pradesh Election Watch have declared that they have never filed income tax returns.

Out of the 166 candidates analyzed who have never filed income tax returns, BSP has 19 (32%) out of 59 candidates, BJP has 23 (42%) out of 55 candidates, SP has 34 (58%) out of 59 candidates and INC has 25 (42%) out of 59 candidates, Peace Party has 18 (51%) out of 35 candidates and JD (U) has 35 (70%) out of 50 candidates who have not filed IT Returns.

Top 3 candidates with maximum assets but who have never filed IT returns are NARENDRA MANI TRIPATHI of INC contesting from Gorakhpur Urban with total assets of Rs. 27.88 crores, followed by MASHHOOR ALAM of BSP from Khalilabad with assets of Rs. 5.07 crores and SHABBEER of Peace Party from Rasara with Rs. 4.20 crores respectively.

78 (23%) candidates have not declared their PAN details of which 20 are from JD (U) 14 are from INC, 14 from SP, 9 from BJP, 8 from Peace Party, 5 from BSP, 5 from Quami Ekta Dal and 3 are from Apna Dal.

Top three candidates with maximum assets but not declared their PAN card details are NARENDRA MANI TRIPATHI of INC contesting from Gorakhpur Urban with total assets of Rs. 27.88 crores, followed by SHABBEER of Peace Party from Rasara with Rs. 4.20 crores and RAM DHARI of Peace Party from Padrauna with assets of Rs. 3.05 crores respectively.



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 67 No. 3
February 12, 2012

Two PMs in the Dock
Kuldip Nayar

FDI in Retail
Kamalnayan Kabra

Asia-Pacific Socialism
D. K. Giri

**There is space for Democratic
Socialist Ideology**
Bhai Vaidya

**Muslim Women's Workshop
in Colombo**
Asghar Ali Engineer

Some Home Truths
Harsh Mander

Mani Ram Bagri

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

No occasion for euphoria

S.Viswam

The exoneration of guilt in the 2G allocation scam of Home Minister P.Chidambaram last week by the CBI trial court came as a welcome break to the UPA government. Just a few days earlier, the Supreme Court had dealt the government a body blow by cancelling all the 122 licences issued by the former Telecom Minister A.Raja, now an undertrial in Tihar jail. That judgement had robbed the government of the little credibility it had left after the exposure of several official misdeeds and expensive errors of judgment all through 2010 and 2011.

It seemed touch and go till the final moments of trial court judge O.P.Saini pronouncing on Subramanian Swamy's petition seeking to include Chidambaram as a co-accused along with Raja. Swamy's claim that he had adequate evidence to sustain his charge against Chidambaram and the successive legal reverses the government has recently suffered created a hype-like situation in which the public expected the worst against the government. In the event, the court ruled that Chidambaram was a participant in the exercise of allocations but he had no criminal intent nor had he conspired with Raja to cheat or swindle nor did he gain,

unlike Raja, any pecuniary benefit. The government had good reason to feel relieved and even elated. This was the first good break for it after a long period of adverse happenings.

However, since Swamy is a litigator by temperament and inclination, he is determined to take the matter to the High Court, and then, if necessary to the Apex Court. The last word on Chidambaram's guilt or innocence is still to be said. For the present, Chidambaram may console himself with the fact that the lower court has found no evidence against him. He should keep praying that the higher courts would echo the lower court's views. When and if that happens, both the government and the minister can heave a real sigh of relief.

In politics, even trivialities can set off unexpected consequences. The Supreme Court ruling on the 2G spectrum scam was bad enough for the government to swallow. An adverse ruling against Chidambaram, a senior Congressman and a senior minister would have eroded the government's legitimacy and authority to the extent of forcing it to go to the country for a mid-term trial of strength. In that sense the trial court's verdict was a life saver for the government and a

disappointment for the Opposition. An adverse verdict would also have impacted adversely against the Congress in UP where the elections being held currently have the capacity to make or mar the ruling coalition at the Centre.

The UPA government is, even otherwise, in disarray, and will remain so till it overcomes the paralysis that afflicts it. It is displaying an incredible difficulty in taking quick and effective decisions. It shows all the signs of incapacity to assess developing situations and offer solutions relevant to the issues. This shortcoming came to the fore during the Anna Hazare campaign and created a bad impression of the government's policy-making processes. Unfortunately for the government and fortunately for the Opposition, all this ineffectualness has led to the erosion of public confidence and faith in the government.

An advantage the government still enjoys is that relevant to its own goodwill in the public, no opposition party commands greater respect. No opposition party has grown strong enough to displace the UPA as things stand at present. But it is a fast-changing scenario, and the UPA will suffer if it remains complacent. In its own interest, it must put its house in order if it wants to retain power.

At the same time, it is also the time now for the non-Congress, non-BJP parties to get their act together ahead of the 2014 parliamentary polls. The political scene has changed dramatically since 2009. The relative strengths and weaknesses of all parties call for fresh assessment, and on the basis of that assessment

Between the lines

Two PMs in the Dock

Kuldip Nayar

Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan have different stars to guide them. The Supreme Court of one country saves the prime minister while of the other asks his counterpart to appear before it for contempt. The cases have no similarity. Yet the message they convey is the same: the judiciary is independent and recognizes no pulls from any quarters.

The lapse noted against prime minister Manmohan Singh is that his office (PMO) did not give sanction for 16 months to the prosecution of Telecommunications Minister A.Raja, who has been guilty of granting licenses to mobile companies, (known as the 2G spectrum scandal) arbitrarily and illegally.

The Supreme Court exonerates Dr. Manmohan Singh on the grounds that the nature of the PM's office is such that he cannot look into the details of every case. The PM's advisors were 'duty bound to apprise him of the seriousness of the allegations' against the minister to enable the PM to take appropriate steps.

The court is justified in finding faults with PM's advisors and officers for having failed him. But it is difficult to believe that PMO did not inform Manmohan Singh about the sanction and that too when it had been pending for 16 months. In fact, the reply of PMO on persistent reminders was that the matter had been referred to Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) when

the sanction was not dependent on its inquiry. Apparently, some other forces influenced the delay.

That the matter is an embarrassment for the PM goes without saying because his cabinet colleague was involved. Yet the explanation does not wash. True, the PM, heading a coalition government, had to be careful about the sensitivity of his ally, the DMK, which naturally backed Raja, its senior member. The public is not, however, concerned with the compulsions of alliance. It is a political matter which Congress President Sonia Gandhi has to sort out with the DMK Chief M. Karunanidhi. It seems that the 16 DMK members in the Lok Sabha are so crucial to the government's tenure that it can go to any extent to placate them. Raja's case shows it.

The correspondence between Raja and PM makes it clear that the PMO knew how Raja was going about favouring certain parties, flouting all rules and norms. Still PMO did not do anything. Either it was instructed not to take any action or the office itself was mixed up.

Whatever the truth, the cursory attitude by PMO or at best the political considerations before it, does not lessen the moral responsibility of either PM or that of Sonia Gandhi, who presides over the alliance with the DMK. I do not know whether any head will roll in PMO. But something is called for in view of the Supreme Court's criticism and PM's noting, "Please examine and let me know the facts"

(Continued on Page 9)

on Raja's recommendation.

To be one up, PMO has hailed the decision: "We welcome the fact that both the learned judges have completely vindicated the prime minister while appreciating the onerous duties of his office". Still the officers owe an explanation for sitting over the sanction for 16 months.

My feeling is that PMO has grown so large that there is a confusion of authority and duplication of work. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had only one secretary, Tirlok Singh, who was also supervising over the rehabilitation of refugees those days. When Lal Bahadur Shastri became the Prime Minister, he chose his secretary L.K.Jha who began spreading his wings, and began wielding authority. Still it was a small office. The real expansion was when Indira Gandhi assumed power. She turned it into a parallel government. She knew no bounds. All ministries have one of their officers working in PMO. It became a mini government. Manmohan Singh has kept the format in tact. The result can be seen from the fact that PMO has finger in every pie, all departments of government.

Still another blow to PMO, if not the PM, is the Supreme Court's cancellation of all the 122 licenses which Raja had issued. The Court has directed them to be auctioned. The inquiry, as the Court has indicated, should be from the time when the BJP government was in power 2001. I recall when I was the Rajya Sabha member, Pramod Mahajan was the Telecommunications minister. It was an open secret that his palm had to be greased before obtaining a license. Even Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, a tall person, was helpless in curbing him.

Again, it is the issue of cleanliness which is at the core of contempt notice by the Pakistan Supreme Court against Prime Minister Raza Yusuf Gillani. He was directed to write to the Swiss government to reopen the cases of graft against President Asif Zardari. That General Pervez Musharraf had closed the cases against him and his wife the late Benazir Bhutto through National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) is a fact. Yet the Court in its wisdom has reopened the cases of corruption. It has declared the ordinance ultra virus of the constitution. Gillani's defence is that the Pakistan President enjoys immunity under the constitution. He (Gillani) is helpless in initiating any proceeding against President Zardari.

In a way, both the Prime Ministers in India and Pakistan face a moral issue. Gillani can be hauled up for contempt and lose his office. Manmohan Singh can own the moral responsibility for PMO's lapses and offer to quit. This is normal in democracy. However, the matter will be decided by the elected representatives of Parliament in India.

Pakistan has the trappings of democracy, the elected national assembly, but the real power lies with the army. However, Pakistan has come to have a third chamber, the Supreme Court. That it is being backed by the army is a coincidence. It is the army which has pushed the case of Gillani who had displeased it by the 'memogate'- the Zardari government asking America to intervene because of the threat of army coup. The commission which the Supreme Court has appointed is not to the liking of President Zardari and his Prime Minister Gillani. But they can do little because the commission has been appointed by the Supreme Court.

Supreme Court's Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhary has retrieved the independence of Pakistan's judiciary to a large extent. Yet the fact remains that the high courts have no jurisdiction to accept petitions against military courts even in case of civilians during the prosecution. India faces no such problems. But corruption has made every institution effete. Once in a while a Supreme Court decision comes to sustain hope. That is also true of Pakistan.

Mani Ram Bagri

Veteran Socialist leader and parliamentarian Shri Mani Ram Bagri, passed away on January 31, 2012 at his native place Hisar (Haryana). He was 93. Shri Bagri, born at Ban Mandori, Hissar District, on January 1, 1920, participated in the national movement at very young age and joined Socialist movement led by Acharya Narendra Deva, Jayaprakash Narayan and Dr Rammanohar Lohia. He was a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly in 1953-55. He was elected to the third Lok Sabha (1962-67), Sixth Lok Sabha (1977-79) and the Seventh Lok Sabha (1980-84). Shri Mani Ram Bagri participated in various socialist movements and was jailed. A close associate of late Shri Rajnarain, he was also detained during the Emergency under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act. Shri Bagri was General Secretary of all-India Samyukta Socialist Party (Lohiavadi) during 1972-74, and later on of Janata Party (S).

Shri Mani Ram Bagri was married to Smt. Dhani Devi on January 1, 1940 and had two sons and three daughters.

- Qurban Ali

FDI in Retail

Kamalnayan Kabra

The discussion paper of the government on FDI in retail trade in India shows that the most important single factor cited in support of permitting FDI in retail trade is the assumed prospect of attracting large and much needed investment in back-end services for value chains and other facilities to reduce post-harvest losses to the farm sector such as cold storages and thus add to total availability of farm goods. Assuming that these investments do take place (by no means a certainty) who would be the major beneficiary of these expected investments and thus of FDI in retail? The sense of uncertainty of front-end retailing bringing with it the back-end investments is implicit in the government's own suggestion to make a certain proportion of the FDI inflows for such facilities mandatory!

But the case for FDI in retail has been argued in the government document as if these companies would deal exclusively in foodgrains, fruits and vegetables. As a matter of fact these farm sector products are unlikely to take more than 10 to 20 per cent of the space and in value terms would be an even smaller part of their turnover. What would happen to the small domestic producers of either non-branded products or brands that are little known compared to the ones produced and marketed by the big local and foreign companies and the imported goods sourced by these big global retailers on the basis of their global strategic decisions? These products are hardly dependent

on these back-end facilities. But before long the domestic producers, especially the small and medium ones, would have to down their shutters as the highly advertised, glamourised elitist goods, the high-end goods as the official paper calls them, would adorn the shop shelves of the foreign companies. Given the small relative size of the farm goods in the total turnover of the companies vis-a-vis the non-farm goods, the case for FDI in retail can hardly be argued on the basis of some tall and vacuous promises for the farm sector products.

Coming to the assumption that FDI would come with what is called latest technology and management, let us ask: how would one ensure that they bring with their direct investment additional investment in setting up cold value chains and other back-end services as also so-called modern technology and management and share these with the organised retail sector's domestic players? What is the meaning of and need for modern technology and management for the family-run small trading firms that have carried on this trade without any disruption and at fairly competitive prices, these days often below the MRP printed on the products? As of now, thousands of Indians are getting education and training in the world's best management institutes and are hired by the companies the world over. Where is the need for knocking at the door of others for the purpose?

The trade technology is, after all, soft technology, and is embedded in

management personnel. Domestic organised retail companies are largely similar to the MNCs in retail except for the fact of nation of origin. Hence it is pertinent to ask: what have the Indian companies in retail done to produce the so-called desirable changes for the farmers, consumers or the micro and small enterprises to give confidence that FDI would carry forward the process? A little less than Rs 9 thousand crores have already been invested in these trading enterprises. What are the results, especially if one were to take note of the working capital these companies have borrowed from the banks? Did they help moderate the inflationary spiral we have been suffering for the past few months? The record shows nothing of the kind. So much so that, according to the government's paper, even the effectiveness of the local big capital retail is dependent on the entry of the MNCs in retail. When the big Indian companies were permitted to enter retail, lots of hopes were invested in them to take steps to reduce wastage and improve the returns to the farmers and other producers by reducing the chain of intermediaries and help reduce the difference between the consumers' rupee and the farmers share in it. Is there any evidence and is there any accountability to ensure that these promises are kept?

In view of the non-rewarding experience with the recently begun domestic organised retailing, it is pertinent to ask: who are going to be the main beneficiaries of the entry of the MNCs in this field?

Actually the official paper speaks of the danger posed by the big and well-entrenched global retail leaders in the form of unfair competition to India's teeming millions of small traders and street peddlers.

Of all the marketisation, deregulation and opening up measures initiated since early 1990s, FDI in retail is going to be the most hurtful, directly hurtful to millions of poor and small means Indians without any compensatory positive gain either in the short run or over a longer time span. FDI in retail would be nothing but simply a Displacement Investment, on par with the compulsory and practically without any real compensation Acquisition of the Land of the Tribals and Other Rural People for Various Projects. The real purpose of the proposed entry of the MNCs in selling the daily necessities is to actually bail out the mega global retailers who have been losing ground in their home countries lately and more so in recent times owing to the global slowdown. It is a clear case that shows how the globalisation fundamentalist orthodoxy ruling the Indian policy scene is caring for the global capital than the Indian masses. Actually the discussion paper reads more like a brief for FDI and a desperate attempt to cover up its manifest weaknesses.

The paper is honest enough to say in so many words that the real intended beneficiaries of this move are going to be the big Indian corporate players who have entered retail. The paper goes on to quote the CMIE data that show that the organised retail companies have done very badly for their own financial health. It is yet another instance of how the tiny private corporate

sector, controlled, managed by less than one percent of our population controls something like 23 per cent of the country's GDP is the primary concern of the public policies in India now. It is this sector that calls the shots in policy matters, of course with the blessings and support from the MNCs. The apex bodies of these interests commissioned so-called studies to plead for FDI in retail and these have been quoted approvingly in the present discussion paper. That the government is not able to tell a study from a lobby instrument and exercise is not a matter of surprise as the two interests and perspectives are perfectly matching each other in the current heightened phase of crony capitalism ruling the policy formulation in India.

Thus the truth comes out even in the official brief for FDI in retail. On the issue of who would benefit the most by FDI in retail, it says quite clearly: Investment in organised retail by domestic players will be ineffectively deployed if FDI is delayed.

This statement can also mean that the small unorganised retail has so far more or less withstood the onslaught by the big retail majors. Hence the big companies could not capture as much of the small ones' market as to make the former thrive. Hence they want a bigger blow against the small competitors so that the locals and the aliens can jointly monopolise the retail trade segment. Thus on its own explicit statement the case that the government is making for FDI in retail trade is mainly for increasing the effective deployment of the investment by big business in retail trade. No scope or space for the millions who would be displaced by the billions of rupees

that would pour in through the retail MNCs and cause displacement of around four crore persons in a matter of a few years. How unequal competition would deal some deadly blows can be seen from an indirect admission in the paper that these big companies would draw huge credits from our banks for their working capital needs and thus crowd out the small traders. It is not just the trade volume that would be lost by the small traders but even the bank credit for them would dry up or at least get reduced. More troublesome would be the rentals and prices of commercial real estate on account of the competition unleashed by the mega MNCs.

...

The government's position is that the FDI would provide the backward linkages in the form of so many services and facilities and thus help the domestic big organised players (who are already clamouring for the grant of industry status to trade) make effective use of their investments in retail trade. Even if these investments in supporting services are made by the MNCs in retail why should they share these facilities with their competitor Indian organised retail companies is not at all clear? Would the behaviour to strengthen their competitors not be a totally business-unlike behaviour? This kind of stipulation is nothing but self-delusion, or something else that is hidden from the public view. Let us not forget, though the discussion paper seems to have, that FDI in retail in India would have the protection of WTO under TRIMs that mandates national treatment to FDI by the host country. In any case India with over 36 per cent of the GDP as her rate of investment and

extensive financial intermediation services does not have to look for FDI unless the real purpose is to get foreign exchange in order to finance the inordinately large and growing current account deficit that is leading to export of Indian jobs to the rich countries, as the US Secretary of State thanked India for buying US goods that created 96 thousand jobs for their citizens in the last fiscal. Real philanthropy indeed! We have resources to spare for investments for all kinds of non-essential, low-priority, even negative social value activities and production, not only by the private sector but even out of the public exchequer. A list of such investments, especially on account of their total disregard of any fair and just sense of social priorities and values, would be practically co-terminus with many, if not most, of the recent projects that account for the bulk of our investment. One may just refer to some fancy extravagant and inessential or perverse priority projects such as so-called world class hotels, airports, shopping malls, IPL kind of commercialisation of spectator sports, a string of overbridges crisscrossing the metropolitan cities, highways at the cost of ruining the Gangetic plains, super deluxe residential buildings, plants for producing luxury automobiles in a country in which the buses and trains are always overcrowded and meet fatal accidents on this account every day. A simple back-of-the-envelope calculation would show that the amounts set aside for such purposes would dwarf the funds needed for all the facilities that are needed in our villages and Mandi towns for safe and hygienic storage and transport of the farm produce and for preventing post-harvest losses. We have air-conditioned passenger rail coaches

but not enough air-conditioned wagons for moving the perishable farm and fisheries products. Why is it that after all the liberalisation and support, the private investment by our well-endowed corporate sector is not forthcoming for such purposes. It is indeed a matter of serious concern that, as the paper says, the number of cold storages for such purposes is under one thousand only and the consequent losses go to a trillion rupees. We can permit futures trade, including in farm products that attracts a total annual turnover exceeding the total GDP for one year. The point is simple: it is not the dearth of investment resources. After all, the huge stocks and flows of black wealth and incomes are floating in the economy. The question is that of their proper socially desirable investment. In any case, what is the role of the growing food processing industry if it cannot pump in resources for the marketing infrastructure for their own raw materials? The plain point is: the resources are available in the country but are perversely deployed. Thus the million rupee issue of concern is their allocation according to the social and national priorities rather than to satisfy the whims and fancies of the tiny elite sections, both Indian and foreign, who are treated more equal than the rest.

The entry of the MNCs with their mega departmental stores with all the modern amenities and paraphernalia that attracts the middle and high income groups for the shopping pleasure would deal a double blow to the traditional street-corner shopkeeper and the doorstep hawkers: One, the unequal competition of the international stores with their own brand image and so-called shopping pleasure

would lead in course of time to displacement of millions of traders. Or in the absence of alternative means of livelihood would force them to stay on but with reduced income. Second, the effectiveness that FDI in retail would impart to the domestic players in organised retailing by making them access the facilities set up by the big brother—the MNC retailer operating in India would make huge demands on urban space, commercial real estate, power supply, urban transport facilities and the consumes rupee that a hitherto highly competitive activity would also become oligopolistic and the consumer would be hit hard by its predatory practices. Actually when inequalities reach a high point they give rise to further tendencies to exacerbate their own intensification. Organised retail and that too by the international giants is a part of the same dynamics of skewedness feeding on existing skewedness.

Actually honesty demands that an independent evaluation is organised to review the performance of the cash-and-carry stores set up by the big MNCs, the experience of single-band stores set up by the foreign companies and also of the performance and impact of organised retailing by the big corporate houses who, instead of offering competition to the foreign majors, are keen to hurt the smallest businesses. Also the experience of contract farming and direct contractual relations between the elephantine companies and pygmy farmers, supposed to provide access to large markets to the small producers, needs to be reviewed as reports indicate that these contracts have become a one-way street to the advantage of these huge companies vis-a-vis the defenceless, poor farmers. Let us conclude by asking

one basic question. There are a large number of problems flagged at the official level as having extremely high priority and the need for action is universally agreed upon. The question of replacing the colonial land acquisition law, the question of land reforms, the question of central law for protecting farm labour, the question of universal social and health security and so on. None of these actions are controversial or need a special study. In some cases even new studies have been carried out. The whole gamut of the key recommendations of the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector are awaiting action. None of these and similar myriad policies have been taken up for time-bound action by setting artificially low dead-lines for national debates. Why is the question of FDI in retail so urgent and critical? What are the forces working for their quick implementation during the stewardship of the present economic policy team as if it were their mission? The whole exercise appears to be so pre-set that the suspicions/ misgivings seem genuine and the prospects for a pro-people decision uncertain and remote. One wishes to be proved wrong. One wonders whether the friendly multitude of small retailers in every street and on our pavements all around are also facing the fate that became the lot of the tongawallas in Delhi: an unsung and unlamented departure from the scene and into the archival records. One wishes that those who are enamoured of the power of executive fiat realise that the small traders are not like the hapless tongawallas of Delhi. These kind of moves are unlikely to be cake-walks. Such Tughlaquesque policies are sure to add fuel to the fire of social unrest and turmoil raging practically all over the country.

Asia-Pacific Socialism

D. K. Giri

An Asian progressive leader's network was launched at the behest of Swedish and German comrades in Bangkok three years ago. Every year, the leaders from Asian countries meet to discuss the problems and prospects of social democracy in Asia. There have been three meetings so far including one in Delhi. Last year it was in Jakarta, and this year the youth wing of Socialist International, IUSY is having its Asia Pacific meeting in Jakarta during 16-19 February. Since the impression gaining ground in the socialist world is that social democracy is growing in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, as it is in the decline in Europe, it may be worth our while to have an overview of Asia Pacific Socialism.

First Asian Socialist Conference

The first Asian Socialist Conference was held in Rangoon in 1953. Fourteen aims and principles were adopted by the Conference. The specific aims were; (i) since most Asian countries are predominantly agricultural and that the peasant class forms an overwhelming proportion of their population, it must affect the entire trend and character of Asian socialism; (ii) It is the fundamental principle of socialism that land should be distributed among those who till it. The improvement of the methods of production and the general raising of the level of village life, call for active attention, (iii) the world socialist movement has a common goal. Yet in different countries, socialism develops in different forms and ways, because of different national and historic

conditions. In view of this diversity as well as in the light of common ultimate objectives of equality of status, mutual collaboration between the socialist movements of various countries is indispensable.

Since 1953, about six decades have gone by and a lot of things have changed, but a lot remains the same. The struggle for legitimate democratic rights, the very basis of socialism, continues. Poverty and deprivation still haunt large number of people in Asian Countries. Yet, on the brighter side, many violent groups are embracing democratic means, the poor are getting relief, and social democrats gaining strength, for instance, a smaller party like Akbayan is sharing power in the present government of Philippines. To continue to pursue socialist objectives, the new formation has come up in the last few years.

Socdem Asia

Of late, a network of Social Democracy in Asia is formed with its secretariat in Jakarta. The Network's official definition is, "The Network of Social Democracy in Asia is a loose group of political parties, pre-party formations, trade unions, and progressive politicians, scholars and activists in the region who share social democratic values and perspectives". It provides a channel and platform for inter-and-transnational sharing of discourses, experience and best practices among progressives and social democrats in Asia. It was launched in 2007 to foster common understanding of important political and ideological

issues and build camaraderie. Among other things, its main activity is to organize an annual conference in one of the Asian capitals. There have been conferences in Bangkok, Penang (Malaysia), New Delhi and Jakarta. The conference in Manila, Philippines was on the topic, “Responding to a Systematic Crisis: Asian Social Democrats in Search of Policy and Practical Solutions”, in May 2009. This conference deliberated on fresh thinking of Social Democratic ideology in Asian context and therefore, needs a detailed reflection. As I was present in the Conference, I have the first hand information of what transpired there. The member countries participating in the conference were Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, India, Nepal, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand and some Europeans - Germans and Swedes. The highlight of the conference was to encourage a common reading and response to the contemporary political and economic situation and make conceptual as well as practical contribution to reshaping a balance between State, Market and Society. It was concluded that a Social Democratic Agenda for Asia needs to focus on inclusive growth and on reducing huge income inequalities by expanding social protection systems. The global crisis could be seen as an opportunity to stimulate growth through social protection. This approach would involve investments in active labour market policies, in community driven infrastructure, low-cost housing, and slum up-gradation, promoting clean technologies, as a driver for both growth and development.

The Role of the State

The Conference sought to redefine the role of the State. It was agreed

that the crisis arose out of all export-oriented economies and markets destroying the public institutions. Import Substitution Industrialization was replaced gradually by Export Oriented Industrialization. The latter suited more to the external market, rather than the national governments. This was cited as the case in Malaysia where the national market became weaker and this was blamed on the State. In Thailand, a lot of neo-liberal and populist policies were introduced – subsidy for low-income earners, budget for re-training of workers, credit for small and medium enterprises, free education for 15 years to all children, support for elderly employment security and so on. But the major challenge was to create a moderate social democratic line different from the ‘Red Shirts’ and ‘Yellow Shirts’. In South Korea, the situation was similar. The government of Lee Myung Bak has been implementing neo-liberal policies which are being criticized by comrades in Democratic Labour Party. The above are some examples of how the market failure is seen as state failure. It is important to push growth, but the regulatory systems of the State have to be improved through reforms in civil services and public institutions. Also, it is necessary to build strong political parties committed to Social Democracy. A strong party makes a good government, which leads to a viable State. Most countries in Asia do not have strong, modern political parties, and some countries none at all. If the State can ensure a vibrant democracy, stimulate growth by freeing the market, while allowing the civil society to moderate the market by asserting their rights and legitimate dues.

Markets Serving People

Markets function in a neo-

liberal framework, which hurts the common and poor people by creating enormous inequality between and within nation states. Gross inequalities have marked Asia-Pacific’s economic development. Markets have to be moderated to check the greed and exploitation. The measures to do so will include transparency and accountability in the financial industry, checking corruption and manipulation by the businesses, abolishing tax relief and exemptions for the economic elite, people’s participation in economic governance and so on. An Asian Social Democratic market policy needs to be rooted in collectivism and communitarian traditions of Asia. There are good practices across Asia where communities can run their economy in cooperation to the benefit of all. In such cooperation, the “lead and lag” policy is finely accommodated, those who lag behind for various reasons could be of assistance to people who are capable of “lead”; everyone is taken care of in this arrangement.

Reinvention of such ideas and experiences is necessary to usher in plural economies where big could be better, but small is beautiful. The Strong does not drive out the weak from the market. People have a choice, for instance, to buy a hand-spun khadi or machine made linen cloth. Market has to be made to work for the people.

Social Democratic Parties

Finally, an overview of social democratic parties in Southeast Asia, the story of South Asia is pretty known in this part of the world. There are 11 states in Southeast Asia that attract some social democratic concerns.- Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand,

Vietnam and Timor-Leste. All these countries have different political systems: Brunei is a monarchy; Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Timor-Leste have some degrees of democracy; Vietnam and Laos are single-party States; and Burma is ruled by a military Junta. Although each country is different, they have common characteristics like the fight against colonialism, later dictatorships, military governments, and for democracy. The march towards democracy is a prelude to introducing Social Democracy. Since 2004 South East Asia has been inching towards democratic politics. Since 2004, which was declared “the year of election” by the Economist, there have been some elections in each of the States, except Brunei, where there is no electoral system, and in Burma, where the last election was held in 1990. The difficulties in establishing democracy in these States are subject of deeper discussion. The assessment made by the Economist is significant, it wrote, “the voting in these States is impressive, but alas, all this voting does not mean that the region’s half-billion people enjoy liberty in true sense, nor that the freedom they have come to enjoy is irrevocable.”

There are at present four social democratic parties in South East Asia which are registered with Socialist International – the Democratic Action Party of Malaysia, the Philippines Democratic Socialist Party, the AKBAYAN citizen party, and the Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor. There are four movements and parties which are part of the SocDem Network. In Indonesia, the Partai Socialis Indonesia one of the oldest parties remains largely social democratic in its orientation. There are others

outside the Parliament - the Partai Buruh, the Partai Perserikatan Rakya, Partai Persatuan Prembebasan Nasional, Partai Rakyat Aceh, Pergerakan Indonesia, Union Sosial Demokratis, Pergerakan. Most of these parties came up in the last four years or so. The National League for Democracy in Burma is close to social democracy in its ideology, although it has not formally announced so. Its leader Daw Ang San Suu Kyi was elected as the honoray president of Socialist International in its 23rd congress in Athens in 2008. In Thailand, there is a Confederation of the Thai Political parties for People and Democracy with Chockchai Suttawet as its president. This group consists of some 15 parties and is active since 2008 and plans to fight next general elections as an alliance to promote social democracy. In Singapore, the Reform Party set up in 2008 came close to social democracy, but unfortunately, its founder, J.B.Jeyaretnam passed away in September 2008 leaving the party in a limbo. In Cambodia, the only opposition party to Cambodia’s People’s party which runs the country in a authoritarian way, is Sam Rainsy Party, which is a liberal democratic party. Lao is a single party socialist state. The only legal party is Lao People’s Revolutionary Party. There was a so-called Social Democratic Party of Lao, but in 1990, three of leaders were jailed for criticizing the government, and not much is heard of the party since.

Social Democracy has played a great role on Southeast Asia. The Asian Socialist Conference mentioned earlier is indicative of that. The present social democratic parties have their base amongst urban intellectuals, but as the Southeast Asian people live more

in rural areas, there is a need to connect with them to expand the base. But there is hesitancy amongst the leaders as the atmosphere is not conducive in most countries. From the experience in the Philippines after Marcos, and in Indonesia after Suharto, it is clearly realized that one needs an atmosphere to build parties for change. Also there is a need for mass political education and training on social democracy as the values of social democracy are not much known in the area dominated by US liberal policy and dictatorships. Intensive interactions, knowledge and experience sharing is the key to revival of social democracy in Asia-Pacific region, Southeast Asia in particular.

(Continued from Page 2)

new alliances have to be forged against the Congress and the BJP. The country can do with a new dispensation, unrelated to the corrupt Congress and the communal BJP. Who would not welcome a change that would usher in a breath of fresh air in the form of clean and honest governance? Far too long has the Congress been allowed to enjoy monopoly and the BJP misplaced voter patronage.

**Janata
Subscription**

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on
Mumbai Bank
in favour of
JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai 400 007

There is space for Democratic Socialist Ideology

Bhai Vaidya

I think that the Indian people have accepted that there is a space for the functioning of the democratic socialist ideology in India. This has been proved during last seven months after the revival of the socialist Party (India) on 28th May 2011 in Hyderabad. The party is progressing fast and people are accepting the need of such a party. It has been proved by the formation of the party in 14 states of India, of which in 12 states there were very big state conferences attended by not only the old socialists but also very large number of young men and women. The formations of the state parties were undertaken in various states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Haryana, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Telangana, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala.

Not only that. Out of 5 states which are in the election fray now the SP is contesting legislature elections in 4 states. We have put up candidates in UP (32), Punjab (1), Uttarakhand (2) and Goa (5), besides participating in the elections for local self governments in various states. The party is registered with the Election commission only recently and we hope that it will be recognized at least in one or two states. The party is contesting elections mainly for upholding the causes of the poor in India. The Socialist Party participated in the struggle against the Jaitapur Nuclear Energy plant on 26th January, 2012 in large number. The party members are fighting the atrocities against the backwards and Dalits in a number of States. Immediately after the revival, the party offered satyagraha for scrapping the Land Acquisition

Act between 2nd October and 12th October, 2011 everywhere as per the resolution in the Hyderabad conference. We are sure that this will be a radical socialist party upholding the causes of the downtrodden Indians, who are facing enormous problems due to the policy of the ruling classes of India based on globalization of investment from the billionaires of the world, pushing 99 percent people to face hardships.

The movement in America by the representatives of 99 percent Americans with the slogan 'Occupy The Wall Street' is a fight against the capitalist system which has concentrated the wealth of the nation in the hands of just 10 percent of the population. So the slogans of the protesters in America are: 1. Tax the rich 2. Banish the war and 3. protect the environment. The common people in America are fighting against the unbearable disparity in the society. If that is the condition of the increasing inequality in America, the high priest of capitalism, how the Indian masses can bear the enormous, unbearable and ever increasing disparity in India? The movement in America had spread all over the Europe because of rising unemployment and indebtedness everywhere. In America, according to that government, the unemployment rate is 9 percent but the prominent economists over there say that it is 16 percent, while the unemployment rate in Spain is 46 percent. The unemployment rate in India is never actually measured by the government. The Indian government only measures educated unemployment rate, leaving millions of working force below SSC to their fate.

If the capitalist system is proving unworkable due to its bubble economy, more than one trillion dollars of debt burden on US and rising unemployment squeezing 99 percent population, what is the alternative before the world? Obviously the Communist system cannot fill the bill as it has almost failed everywhere in the world. Russia is tasting the salty waters of capitalism and China is experimenting with market socialism, holding Mao responsible for various lapses in China. Nobody can forget the dark regimes of Stalins and Pol Pots and other various communist dictators in so many countries. Some communist parties have accepted the parliamentary system but they are still rigid Marxist. Now the world has to come back to Democratic Socialist ideology relevant to the 21st century. Democratic socialism doesn't allow the individuals to become victims at the altar of society, nor does it allow the society to run asunder for the selfish wants of individuals. There is a perfect synchronization between the society and the individuals in democratic socialist society. There are no privileged classes or sections in this system. The parliamentary system plays the role of revolution by changing the rulers by the politically conscious masses at set intervals of elections without shedding the blood of citizens. Under the democratic socialist societies there are bloodless changes and there is minimum inequality between the individuals and between the sections. The models of democratic socialism change according to the situations in various countries. It is a dynamic and flexible system. The western industrial model cannot

be applicable to the Indian society, based on mainly agriculture which is the occupational base for 70 percent of the Indian population. We have to adopt suitable social forms for our needs. Globalization has become a very rigid system forced on all the societies of the world irrespective of their ways of life and needs. That is the reason why globalization has played havoc in India where more than 2.5 lacs of farmers committed suicide during last 20 years of experimenting with LPG policy by various governments of Congress and BJP at the centre as well as in States. Unfortunately all the major parties, as well as all the regional parties in India fell prey to the idea of globalization at the cost of majority of Indians. Even the communist parties are not ready to disown the western industrial model. I am not in favour of agricultural model either. I am in favour of agro-industrial model for India. The communist parties have a warped vision about the caste category in India, which they unnecessarily include in the category of class. The Socialist Party is the only party which is opposing the policy of globalization tooth and nail. I am sure that gradually the Indian masses will realize the true nature of globalization and follow this party, which was initially founded in 1934 by socialist stalwarts like Acharya Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, Yusuff Meherally, S. M. Joshi and others. SPI is a proud inheritor of the moral politics of Gandhiji and also the legacy of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar who enriched Indian socialism by making it grapple with the caste factor along with Dr. Lohia. Gandhiji has given us the principle of political and economic decentralization. Both these great men have enriched the philosophy of democratic socialism. Now the Socialist Party (India) is on the forward march.

Highlights of the report on candidates

Out of the 337 candidates analyzed for the 2nd phase of Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections, 118 candidates or 35 percent declared criminal cases against them. In 2007 assembly elections for the whole of Uttar Pradesh, 28 percent candidates had declared criminal cases against themselves.

Among these 118 candidates, Mokhtar Ansari (Quami Ekta Dal, contesting from Mau and Ghosi constituency) has declared maximum number of criminal cases. He has declared 15 criminal cases including 9 serious IPCs. He is followed by Upendra (SP, Phephana constituency) and Javed Iqbal (BSP, Kushi Nagar constituency), who has declared 11 and 5 criminal cases respectively.

Amongst major parties, every party has given tickets to candidates who have declared criminal cases. SP has 30 out of 59 (51 percent), BSP has 23 out of 59 (39 percent), BJP has 20 out of 55 (36 percent), INC has 19 out of 59 (32 percent), Peace Party has 8 out of 35 (23 percent), JD(U) has 12 out of 50 (24 percent), candidates with declared criminal cases.

Out of these 55 (16 percent) have declared serious criminal cases like murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, robbery, extortion etc. BJP has 9, BSP has 10, SP has 12, Peace Party has 3, INC has 10, JD(U) has 7, Quami Ekta Dal has 2 and Apna Dal has 1 such candidates.

A total of 138 candidates out of 337 analyzed for the 2nd Phase i.e. 41 percent are crorepatists. In 2007, there were 22 percent crorepati

candidates.

The candidates with maximum assets in 2nd Phase is Shah Alam of BSP from Mubarakpur constituency with assets worth 54.44 Crores followed by Subhash of SP from Saidpur with 35.32 Crores and Narendra Mani Tripathi of INC from Gorakhpur Urban constituency with assets worth 27.88 crores.

Six Candidates have declared assets less than 1 lakh.

A total of 10 candidates out of 337 analyzed declared liabilities of 70 Lakhs and above.

Among major parties, the average asset per candidate for SP is 2.13 Crores, For BSP is 3.38 Crores, for BJP is 1.24 Crores, For INC is 1.68 Crores, For Peace Party is 2.03 Crores, For JD (U) is 61.02 Lakhs, Quami Ekta Dal is 1.36 Crores and Apna Dal is 13.68 Lakhs.

212 out of 337 candidates analyzed i.e. 63 percent are graduates or with higher educational qualifications.

Out of 1098 candidates contesting for 2nd phase of Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections 2012, only 76(7percent) candidates are women; the number of women candidates for BSP is 2(3 percent) out of 59, for BJP it is 6(11 percent) out of 55, INC it is 8(14 percent) out of 59 and SP it is 5(8 percent) out of 59.

Highlights of the report on asset increase of Re-contesting MLAs (Phase 2)

Number of re-contesting MLAs analyzed for 2nd phase of UP 2012

Assembly Elections— 34

The average asset of these MLAs as declared in 2007 is Rs 86,17,386 (86 lakhs).

The average asset of these MLAs as declared in 2012 is, Rs 2,47,58,021 (2.47 crore).

Average asset growth for these re-contesting MLAs is Rs 1, 61, 40,634 (1.61 crore).

Average percentage growth in assets for these MLA is 187 percent.

Sarvesh Kumar Singh of BSP from Azamgarh has the highest increase in asset worth Rs.8.81 Crores, followed by Pramod of BSP from Deoria with an asset increase of Rs. 4.51 Crores and Rajkumar of BSP from Ghazipur constituency with an asset increase of Rs. 4.38 Crores.

The highest percentage increase (1934 percent) has been for Umesh Pandey of BSP from Madhuban constituency. His assets rose from 5.58 lakhs in 2007 to 1.13 crores in 2012. He is followed by Madho Prasad of INC from Chauri-chaura constituency with a percentage increase of 1025 percent (6.90 lakhs in 2007 to 77.62 lakhs in 2012) and Sarvesh Kumar Singh of BSP from Azamgarh constituency with an increase of 887 percent (99.42 lakhs in 2007 to 9.81 crores in 2012).

Highlights of the report on ITR and PAN details of contesting candidates (Phase 2)

Uma Shanker (BSP) has the highest annual income at Rs. 5.54 Crores followed by Shah Alam (BSP) at Rs. 1.03 Crores, Jetendra

(Continued on Page 15)

Muslim Women's Workshop in Colombo

Asghar Ali Engineer

M.C.Razmin of Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum invited me to conduct a workshop for his media workers on Muslim women's rights from 10th to 14th January 2012 in Colombo. Among the participants there were some University students and some media persons and broadcasters. They had done considerable work on problems of Muslim personal laws in the field. This field work which was presented in the workshop indicated the kind of problems Muslim women faced in Sri Lanka.

In Sri Lanka there are about 7.5 percent Muslims, majority of whom are Tamil speaking. There are also some Muslims of Malay origin as well as Muslims of Indian origin. Among Muslims of Indian origin are mainly traders like Memons, Khojas and Bohras. These Indian origin Muslims are quite rich and more organized. Tamil Muslims are followers of Shafi'i Mazhab in jurisprudence. Bohras and Khojas follow Isma'ili School whereas Memons are Hanafites.

There is no Muslim personal law board but traditional law is enforced as in India and the Ulama naturally oppose any change in the law. There is very poor awareness even among the educated Muslim women about their rights and as in India they think Shari'ah laws are totally divine and immutable. Mr. Razmin, a post-graduate in Feminism is trying to create awareness among Muslim women for change. He had been reading my articles and papers on women's rights in Islam and hence

invited me to conduct this workshop.

I have been to Colombo several times in the past but this time I had gone after several years after the civil war was over. However, I did not find much change in Colombo except that the airport has been expanded to quite a large one compared to the old airport and that one does not find many gun wielding soldiers in the city. One pleasing thing about Colombo is there are no high rise buildings in the city and no concrete jungle. Colombo is remarkably clean city as compared to Mumbai.

Our workshop began in the office of Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum at 11 a.m. with Mr. Razmin's teammates. First they presented their field report which was based on interviews of several women in Muslim areas in few districts in South Sri Lanka. It seems polygamy is the main problem, Sri Lankan Muslim women face. Thankfully there is no problem of triple divorce as in India though Shafi'u Mzhah also permits triple divorce in one sitting.

Most of the women have to face the problem of co-wives. In some cases men abandon the first wife and marry another one and in many cases they marry more than one wife. They were thus keen to know whether Qur'an permits polygamy unconditionally as a privilege for men. This is how it is projected by the Ulama in Sri Lanka. They tell women that Allah has given this privilege to men to marry four wives

simultaneously.

In order to put the whole thing in perspective I first began by throwing light on women's plight in pre-Islamic Arabia. I told them that situation varied from place to place. One situation prevailed in Mecca, an urban area which was also a centre of international finance and trade and where tribals had formed inter-tribal trade corporations and were quite prosperous. Another situation prevailed in Madina, an oasis and primarily an agricultural area which was quite fertile due to fertile soil. Madina had Jewish population also who followed written law of Torah. Third situation prevailed in desert areas where nomadic Bedouins lived.

Whereas Mecca and Madina were urban settled areas with considerable population following age old traditions, Nomads, on the other hand did not live at one place and their traditions and customs varied from tribe to tribe. Among Bedouins there were some tribes where polyandry prevailed and there are instances of one woman having around 10 husbands. In Mecca there were, on the other hand, instances of one man having 10 wives. Of course polyandry was more of an exception than rule among the Bedouins.

The Arab society, like other societies, was fiercely patriarchal society and one cannot expect patriarchal societies to empower women. In fact for women empowerment patriarchal societies are main obstacles. In Mecca women's situation was very precarious and in initial stages women responded to Islamic mission quite enthusiastically and one of the first respondents was Prophet's

(PBUH) wives and subsequently also many women responded before their husbands or sons did.

Another common feature in all three categories mentioned above was absence of any written law. Every thing depended on oral traditions. Thus Qur'an came as a first written text containing definite laws in respect of women. Also I told them that Qur'an gave women equal status with men and concrete rights in respect of marriage, divorce, inheritance, property, etc. without asking for it. They did not have to demonstrate or agitate (or even they did not expect it in their dreams) and got equal rights whereas in the West they had to come out on streets to get those rights. They had to agitate and got these rights only in early twentieth century while Qur'an gave women 1400 years ago without asking for it.

For the first time they got written rights in a region where literacy was as good as non-existent. No doubt women responded to Islam enthusiastically. I also explained to them grave misunderstanding about polygamy. It is not, according to the Qur'an a privilege but responsibility for men. This verse about polygamy i.e. verse 4:3 was revealed after 2nd battle the Prophet (PBUH) had to fight in which 10 per cent of Muslim men were killed leaving behind widows and orphans.

The Qur'an asked men to look after these widows and their property and children and if they cannot marry these widows up to four but if they fear they cannot do justice they should better marry one. Thus it is clear from this verse on polygamy that they cannot marry any woman they like but only war widows and

that too with stringent condition of justice. It is great responsibility and not privilege in any case. Muslim men were also advised to look after widow's children which are even greater responsibility but later on this verse was used by men in a patriarchal society only to marry more wives and treat it as privilege. It is gross distortion of the Qur'anic responsibility thrust on men. And verse 4:129 makes it further clear that even if you want you cannot do justice with more than one wife and do not leave first wife hanging in the air. This verse is more than clear that monogamy is the rule and polygamy is an exception for exceptional situation to help needy widows with children who cannot look after their properties. A great responsibility indeed.

One day i.e. 13th of January was kept for women working in various NGOs to clear their doubts about the rights of women in Islam. A woman who was studying law in the university put a question: is it not duty of Muslim woman to obey her husband and she quoted a hadith from Bukhari. She was very much insistent that a Muslim woman must obey her husband and cannot go out of her house in his absence even if her father is severely sick or even if he is dead.

I told her there is no such thing in Qur'an and Qur'an nowhere requires wife to obey her husband but instead advises both to do anything with mutual consultation. In fact entire discourse in Qur'an about women is right based and entire discourse about men is duty based. How can then wife be made obedient to husband? Both are independent agents and can act independently as mature moral agents without being

subservient to each other.

I also told her that Qur'an does not even use the words husband and wife but uses the word *zawj* and *zawjah* or simply *zawj* which abundantly makes it clear that both are absolutely equal (*zawj* means couple). In Arabic husband was called *ba'ul* which was one of the gods of pre-Islamic pantheon and Qur'an did not want to give husband such a status. Unfortunately she kept on insisting that hadith cannot be wrong. I told her hadith cannot be above Qur'an or contradict Qur'an. Such hadithes were used in a patriarchal society to make women subordinate to men and women being ignorant of Qur'an accepted these ahadith without critically examining them in the light of Qur'an.

Another common abuse of women in Sri Lanka is wife beating. They maintain Qur'an permits wife beating as per verses 4:34. I told them in fact this verse was revealed when a woman complained to the Prophet that her husband slapped her without any flaw on her part the Prophet (PBUH) allowed her to retaliate. How can then Qur'an allow wife to be beaten? The word *daraba* is wrongly translated. Qur'an itself uses it in more than 12 different senses. It can in no way allow wife beating. Our Ulama also suppress another verse 33:35 which is very important verse about gender equality in Qur'an.

I discussed host of other questions including woman as half witness, her property rights and question of inheritance. Women were extremely happy as for the first time someone told them with great emphasis that

(Continued on Page 15)

Some Home Truths

Harsh Mander

Urban homeless people lead hard lives with no shelter or social protection even while sustaining cities with their cheap labour. Inhabiting city footpaths, public parks, hume pipes, or the courtyards of shrines, they are invisible to the State, because they lack a formal address, and also even the elementary markers of citizenship of poor people in India, like ration cards and voters' identity cards. We estimate that at least one percent of the population of cities is homeless, making the numbers of urban homeless persons at least around 3 million.

My colleagues and I studied for the Planning Commission the social, economic and nutritional situation of urban homeless people in four cities — Delhi, Chennai, Madurai and Patna. We found that life on the streets involves surviving continuously and precariously at the edge, in a physically brutalised and challenging environment. Elementary public services and healthy food are denied. The challenges of this bleak and often lonely existence are aggravated by a hostile State, which illegalises and even criminalises their self-help efforts for shelter and livelihoods.

Our studies revealed that contrary to our assumptions, homelessness is mostly not a transient condition of recent migrants. People become homeless after falling through every support and security net: of the family, of the community, and of the State. They are not just socially excluded but expelled. Once they become homeless, they tend to remain that way forever. The

chances of homeless people dying are at least eight times more than those who live in homes. They can rarely escape homelessness, unless the State makes special efforts to pull them out of their desperate, nearly hopeless conditions.

However, entirely contrary to this, in almost every city in India, homeless citizens have remained resolutely neglected by local and state governments. Governments have rarely provided to them even minimal essential services of basic survival, such as shelters, to ensure that they do not have to sleep rough under the open sky. Shelters are part of the urban landscape in cities around the world — but not in India. Although there was a provision for night shelters in earlier Plans, even this has lapsed due to lack of initiative by state and local governments.

This has begun to change — very slowly — only with the intervention of the Supreme Court of India. In the winters of 2009-10, when homeless persons were dying on the streets because they had no shelters, we wrote to the Supreme Court about the ever-looming threat to the fundamental right to life of people living on the streets in Delhi. The court directed the Delhi government to immediately provide shelters to them, with basic amenities. The Delhi High Court also took suo moto notice, and has monitored this closely.

The Supreme Court extended its directions to build permanent shelters in all major cities to all

governments. But even two years later, no government has complied with these orders, and many states with huge homeless populations - like Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal, Assam and until recently Bihar - have been particularly recalcitrant.

Many occupants of shelters work during nights, such as head-loaders or those serving in wedding parties, and thus need shelters to sleep during the day. Casual workers also often do not get employment on a daily basis, and so often need shelters during the free days. Therefore, shelters should open through the day and night and must be located close to the areas where the poorest can find casual work - railway stations, bus depots, terminals, markets, wholesale mandis, etc. The destitute population among the homeless — including those into begging, the mentally ill, the elderly, women headed households, persons with disability and street children — are often the most invisible, and various social security, food, education and healthcare schemes of the government elude them due to their perceived illegal existence.

Homeless shelters can never be a substitute for housing or social protection. Shelters are the necessary first step for homeless persons to escape disaster-like situations in which they find themselves. But they should not be their final destination, which must be decent affordable social housing. Able-bodied homeless men and women should be helped to move from shelters over time, to working women's and men's hostels, and labour transit camps for construction workers; and further to rental accommodation, and finally their own dwelling units. However, the most vulnerable segments of

homeless persons, such as old persons without care and mentally ill and challenged persons, may need long term social protection institutions.

Governments must recognise and respect the autonomy and independence of homeless people and make clear that all shelters are voluntary, and people can't be treated as being in custody. In many cities, anti-beggary laws are misused to criminalise homeless people. This must stop. Most homeless people work, they do not beg. But those

who do beg should not be treated as offenders, but as people to whom the State must extend social protection on priority.

Today, people who the State most violently persecutes are those who should have the first claim to public support. Governments must secure for the most wretched of our cities elementary protection of a roof over their heads and the rights and the dignity that are due to every human being, but which have been too long suppressed and too long denied to our homeless populations.

(Continued from Page 12)

(BSP) at Rs. 1.02 Crores and Suresh (BSP) at Rs. 75.46 Lakhs as per their last filed Income Tax Returns.

A total of 166 candidates (49 percent) out of the 337 candidates analyzed by the Uttar Pradesh Election Watch have declared that they have never filed income tax returns.

Out of the 166 candidates analyzed who have never filed income tax returns, BSP has 19 (32 percent) out of 59 candidates, BJP has 23 (42 percent) out of 55 candidates, SP has 34 (58 percent) out of 59 candidates and INC has 25 (42 percent) out of 59 candidates, Peace Party has 18(51 percent) out of 35 candidates and JD (U) has 35(70 percent) out of 50 candidates who have not filed IT Returns.

Top 3 candidates with maximum assets but who have never filed IT returns are NARENDRA MANI TRIPATHI of INC contesting from Gorakhpur Urban with total assets of Rs. 27.88 crores, followed by MASHHOOR ALAM of BSP from Khalilabad with assets of Rs. 5.07

crores and SHABBEER of Peace Party from Rasara with Rs. 4.20 crores respectively.

78(23 percent) candidates have not declared their PAN details of which 20 are from JD (U) 14 are from INC, 14 from SP, 9 from BJP, 8 from Peace Party, 5 from BSP, 5 from Quami Ekta Dal and 3 are from Apna Dal.

Top three candidates with maximum assets but not declared their PAN card details are NARENDRA MANI TRIPATHI of INC contesting from Gorakhpur Urban with total assets of Rs. 27.88 crores, followed by SHABBEER of Peace Party from Rasara with Rs. 4.20 crores and RAM DHARI of Peace Party from Padrauna with assets of Rs. 3.05 crores respectively.

- Uttar Pradesh Election Watch

(Continued from Page 14)

women are equal to men and enjoy all those rights which men do, nay are bit more privileged in some respects.



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 67 No. 4
February 19, 2012

Security weaknesses exposed

S.Viswam

Strength to judiciary's elbow
Kuldip Nayar

**Indian Democracy:
from Political to Social!**
D. K. Giri

The other side of life
Harsh Mander

**Forgotten Heroes
of Yesteryears**
S. Ramesh

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Israel has blamed Iran for perpetrating a terrorist attack against Israeli interests in three cities on a single day—Tbilisi in Georgia (in the erstwhile Soviet Union area), New Delhi and the Thai capital Bangkok. Till each of these attacks is investigated thoroughly and the culprit identified, India would be well advised not to participate in the Israel-Iran blame game. We need to first ascertain why a friendly country like Iran should choose the Indian capital to indulge in global terrorism of the kind the three attacks represent. Union Home Minister P.Chidambaram has said that the Monday's event was clearly a terrorist attack launched by a well-trained man who seemed well versed in the use of what are known as magnet bombs, a world war two relic. India has done its best to maintain cordial bilateral ties with Iran and Iran on its part has put behind it its resentment against India for having voted against it in some crucial UN Security Council sessions. Currently, much to the dislike of the US, India buys Iranian oil, a commodity under US economic sanctions against Iran. Hence, let the investigations into the attacks conclude, and then both Iran and Israel, as also India, will know who is the guilty party. New Delhi would naturally recall that the Pakistani terrorists who targeted Mumbai on November 11, 2008 attacked a Jewish residence Chabad House in Colaba and killed some Jews. Pakistan's Lashkar-e-Taiba and Osama's Al Qaida have never concealed their hostility for Israel.

However, Monday's episode in which a man riding a two-wheeler pasted a magnet bomb on a vehicle owned by the Israeli embassy in New Delhi and set off an instant explosion has served to highlight the basic weaknesses in India's internal security regimen. The attack, on the vehicle in which the wife of an Israeli diplomat was travelling—she had the presence of mind to jump out of the car when it exploded—, was at a spot a stone's throw from Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's Race Course Road residence. The manner in which our security agencies handled the aftermath of the attack showed how clueless they were about the terrorist threat in a top security area. If an attack can be mounted in a top security area, the less said about the vulnerability of other unguarded unprotected areas the better.

Undoubtedly, an anti-Indian terrorist threat exists. This is well known. Pakistan is one of the prime exporters of this category of terrorism, leave

alone its other world-wide targets. India occupies the top of the list of Pakistani terrorism. It is not as if Pakistan itself is invulnerable; it also has a permanent threat sourced to internal militants and anti-democratic forces. In view of the external threat being compounded by internal threat to national security by left-wing extremists, India's counter-terrorism apparatus and strategies have to be top class and equal to the world's best. A high degree of sophistication is called for in evolving strategies to combat two different kinds of terrorisms.

Belatedly, New Delhi has decided to set up a national counter-terrorism centre. It is scheduled to be launched within a few weeks. The institution has got to be one that can match the best of its kind globally even if the Centre has to set apart sizable amounts in the budget. India lacks training, infrastructure and appropriate weaponry to fight the menace. Besides, we can take a few lessons from other advanced nations in intelligence gathering techniques. The new National Investigative Agency, as the institution it to be known, must help our security network catch up with the advanced techniques, technology and training.

Between the lines

Strength to judiciary's elbow

Kuldip Nayar

I have always considered that the success of lawyers' movement in Pakistan in 2008 was its first war of independence. The formation of Pakistan was the result of a peaceful agreement which it signed with India under the aegis of the British government.

The primacy of Pakistan's Supreme Court is because of that movement. There was a time when the Supreme Court would uphold the army coups as it did in the cases of General Mohammad Ayub and General Zia-ul Haq. A new interpretation to the constitution, the rule of "necessity," was provided to give legitimacy to the coups.

The court has now graduated to be a powerful entity so as to arraign even Prime Minister Yusuf Reza Gilani for contempt and indict him. He, in turn, has challenged the judgment and has decided to prove the charges wrong through evidence he will provide in the next few days.

Supreme Court's Chief Justice is the same Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry who suffered at the hands of the army because he dared to go against the wishes of then chief of army staff General Pervez Musharraf. Justice Chaudhry was confined to one room, along with his family, for months and made to undergo more or less a solitary imprisonment. That in a country, where all other institutions are tottering, the emergence of Supreme Court is indeed evoking hope for

the future of democracy. After all, the judiciary is the bedrock in such a system.

Yet I have not been able to understand the logic of criticism that by strengthening the judiciary, the polity is weakening because such a process is at the expense of the power that the executive and parliament enjoy. For instance, the institutions in India have gained because of a series of judgments. The recent one, which Gilani's lawyer Aitzaz Ahsan has quoted to defend the Pakistan Prime Minister, is the cancellation of 122 licences of allotment in the 2G spectrum (mobiles) scandal on the ground that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh did not know about the letters which his office had received from the indicted former Telecom Minister A. Raja. The blame was put on the officials and advisers. So has been the tenor of Aitzaz Ahsan's arguments before the Pakistan Supreme Court.

In India, the judiciary has gone to the extent of laying down that parliament cannot change the basic structure of the constitution, meaning thereby, secularism, federalism and the parliamentary system. True, parliament represents the people but in the heat of the moment or any vociferous movement, parliament can be swayed by the mood in the country prevailing at a particular time. The same principle that the basic structure of the constitution cannot be violated holds good for Pakistan as well, even though its

Madhu Dandavate

By
B. Vivekanandan
Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust
D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007.

Supreme Court has not said so unequivocally.

By kicking up the dust, the real issue of corruption cannot be obscured. President Asif Ali Zardari is said to have laundered billions of dollars and stashed in Swiss banks. The fact that the then President General Musharraf condoned the crime through an ordinance (the National Accord and Reconciliation Act) does not mean that Zardari can appropriate the money which really belongs to the Pakistan exchequer. Gilani is only Zardari's face. He owes his office to him and therefore it was natural that he should take the responsibility of Zardari's acts of omission and commission.

Gilani's defence that Zardari enjoys immunity under the constitution may be all right for legal purposes, although the Supreme Court would probe whether immunity is absolute or whether it can be questioned in any way. At least the Supreme Court can order that the money stashed abroad be brought back to Pakistan even if it "remains" in Zardari's account. Immunity means that no action can be taken against Zardari since he is the President who enjoys such powers under the constitution. Yet immunity cannot be stretched to a point where Zardari is not directed to transfer back the stashed money to the Pakistani banks.

Chief Justice Chaudhry was not lessening the stature of the executive by asking Gilani to write to the Swiss authorities to reopen the case of Zardari's assets in banks in that country. That Gilani sits over the court's order for more than two years shows his disdain for the judiciary. And this also shows the arrogance of the executive. To characterize

a case of corruption as an attack on government or, for that matter, parliament, is not to see the wood for the trees. The corrupt, however high in position, should be brought to book to revive people's faith in democracy. Too many instances of graft in South Asian countries involving top people have disfigured democracy in the region and there is worthwhile legislation coming for combating graft.

It is difficult to guess about the fate of Gilani's trial for contempt. But it will be an embarrassment for Pakistan. Already the court has appointed Attorney General Anwarul Haq as the prosecutor. This amounts to pitting the government's top legal adviser against the Prime Minister. The ruling Pakistan People's Party has rightly said that it is a sad day in the history of Pakistan since the serving prime minister has been charged. If one were to look at the case from a different angle, the court's judgment could be described as a day when democracy touched the greatest height in Pakistan—a country where the judiciary was a party to the rule of the armed forces. This is something rare in South Asian countries.

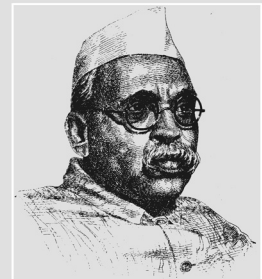
The black money, stashed abroad, is going to haunt the Manmohan Singh government because the director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has said at a public forum that the Indians have unaccounted money, as much as Rs 24.5 lakh crore (about \$500 billion) in banks abroad. He has also been frank enough to say: "If king is immoral, so will be the subjects."

The normal reaction after the disclosure would have been an all-out effort to get back the money. Yet there is no worthwhile action

because many depositors belong to political parties, including the ruling Congress. The CBI director has himself admitted that it would be difficult to bring back the money: "The probe is complex, time consuming, costly and requires political will."

Now that the example of Pakistan's Supreme Court is before us, some individuals can approach our Supreme Court to direct the government to bring back the money to India. Here the hurdle of immunity does not come in. The committee which the Supreme Court appointed in an earlier case to look into the matter is too slow in processing. Some shock treatment to the government is needed.

**Acharya Javadekar
A Satyagrahi Socialist**



G. P. Pradhan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

*D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir
Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W), Mumbai 400 007.*

Indian Democracy: from Political to Social!

D. K. Giri

The single-most important achievement in India since independence in 1947 has been the continuance of the democratic politics. This has progressively, though very slowly, raised the people's consciousness through periodic elections held at the central and state levels and the consequent changes of governments.

There is now a broad consensus among all major political parties about the importance and efficacy of democracy. There could be different views about how it could be improved: whether parliamentary system is better or a presidential system is more suitable, whether we should preserve the first-past-the post electoral system or change over to a proportional representation system. There are also different ideas regarding electoral reforms but everybody wants to defend the democratic system. On the issue of devolution of power - from the center to the states, to the districts, to the local level - there is an increasing degree of consensus among major political parties.

Uniqueness of Indian Democracy

Although India is considered the biggest democracy in the world, it defies standard democratic definition. The rate of people's participation and political excitement is not being understood by the scholars. India does not have an extensive welfare system but has over 300 million people below the poverty line earning less than rupees 20 a day. The lower the social order (caste), income and education, the greater is the participation.

The tension between economic growth and political democracy is manifesting now as India's economy has started booming. But the boom will last as long as the dynamics of democracy allows it. Democracy and market reforms do not easily sit together, at least not in India. No doubt "India is attempting a transformation few nations in modern history have successfully done"; liberalizing the economy with an established democracy is a tall order. Democracy and market reforms are not inherently contradictory but have to be carefully managed.

India began its political life with universal suffrage long before the transition to modern industrial economy took place. In the West, industrial revolution preceded the universal suffrage, the poor got the right to vote only when the societies had become relatively rich and a welfare state attended to the needs of low income segments of the population. In East Asia, countries like South Korea and Taiwan had fully fledged democracies in 1980s and mid-1990s only after their economic upturn. China and Singapore are yet to be liberal democracies.

Ethnicity and Democracy

Indian ethnicity provides a basis for conflict formation as well as mobilization. But the huge diversities and the forces generated by democratic politics prevent the state from choosing a single cultural identity, even a majoritarian one, as the basis of nationhood. Ethnic pluralism in India on the one hand

sustains political democracy while it also cuts into its bases. Democratic politics focuses on individuals, but in India the mobilization has been group and caste based. The dependence on ethnic mobilization is due to absence of a viable ideology, a socio-economic platform. Even the Congress party from the late 1960s felt threatened and took recourse to mobilization along caste, tribe and religious lines which led to the rise of ethnic and regional parties.

Breakdown of Nehruvian Consensus

The old Nehruvian consensus has broken down. Although it has been breaking down gradually over a period of time, it was dramatically and tragically, manifested by the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. This has brought to an end 'the Nehru era' in Indian politics.

The eventual end of the dynastic rule is only one aspect of this development. The present ruling Congress party may lean on the Nehru family, but its leaders will soon realize, if they have not already done so, that their survival lies in moving away from the traditional Nehruvian line and taking to a new path in order to evolve a new consensus. Nehru's idea of secularism, and as it has been practiced by his successors, has cracked up and the emergence of the BJP, with its strident

Hindu postures, as the second most powerful political formation in the country, is a clear signal. The Nehruvian concept of the public sector and planning has now been undermined by the Congress(I)

government itself, as it has started to promote the ideas of privatization, liberalization and marketisation.

With the demise of single party domination, several ethnic and regional parties have come into play. But since none of them can assume power on their own, they have entered into alliances and coalitions to form alternative and competing structures for power. Although the coalition politics has come to stay for the time being, it is influenced more by political convenience than by ideological affinity. The absence of ideological coherence in the coalition may distort the logic of development and may weaken the democratic institutions. Therefore, the challenge for the future for the leadership is to introduce and imbibe ideological orientation.

State of the Parties

India is truly a multi-party system. There are 730 registered but unrecognized parties in the country. In 2010 elections, 230 political parties were contesting elections according to the Election Commission. The NDA government (1999 to 2004) led a coalition government of four political parties and the current UPA government has 12 parties in its coalition. This is also the feature in the State politics. However, ideologically there are four major streams nationally - communism, conservatism, Congressism and socialism. Communists (CPI and CPIM) were in coalition with the Congress. Conservatives are the BJP, the main opposition. Socialists are dispersed in several parties like JDU, JDS, Samata Party, Samajwadi Party - they are all factions of Janata Dal, Samajbadi Janparishad and recently formed Socialist Party (India).

CPM's Contradictions

If we want to see a shining example of "false consciousness" in India, it is to be found most vividly reflected in the CPM. What is its actual record? It had split away from the united CPI in 1964 under the inspiration of the Chinese Communist party and responding to the direct call of the leader of the pro-Chinese Indonesian Communist party, Aidit. When it staged its first convention at Tenali in Andhra Pradesh, Mao Tse-tung's portrait adorned its platform. It wanted to carry forward Mao's banner against "reformism" and "revisionism" of the Soviet variety upheld in India by the CPI, and to imbibe the revolutionary spirit of the Chinese Communist Party.

However, it decided to shift its "revolutionary" struggle into the parliamentary forum and participated in the 1967 elections. It emerged as the bigger of the two communist parties and participated in the United Front government in West Bengal and the Left Democratic government in Kerala. Since then, it has never looked back to the "revolutionary past", though it has never stopped mouthing revolutionary slogans. The more revolutionary cadres in the CPM posed the right question to the leadership: Why did you split the CPI, if you wanted to carry forward the CPI's reformist and revisionist policies? As there was no satisfactory answer, they left the party and formed the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), the genuine Maoist group. Some of them were so genuine that they coined the slogan: "China's Chairman (Mao) is our chairman."

The CPI and CPM no longer talk of socialism because their "model socialist states" have either collapsed

or are on the verge of collapse. The lack of democracy in the political sphere and the lack of efficiency in economic life in the communist countries, their incapacity to solve the social problems of corruption, ethnic conflicts, alienation, etc. have stopped them from discussing socialism. The only issue on which the Indian communists speak with some authenticity today is secularism.

Drift towards Social Democracy

The traditional Marxist-Leninist ideology has nothing to contribute towards the solution of any major problems facing India. The thirty-three years of communist rule in West Bengal provide a striking example of the failure of the communist experiment because it cannot claim success in a single sphere of life - administration, health, education, transport, economic growth, employment generation - where its record is not any better than state governments of "bourgeois parties".

The communists all over the world, including Indian, can "save" themselves only by moving towards social democracy, which they have abused all their lives, except, when for tactical reasons they have collaborated with it, with the ultimate idea of finishing it off. In their political behavior with other parties, it is instructive to quote Prem Bhasin: "the communists always betrayed their allies and backstabbed them at every turn. A secret circular of the communist party of India had come into the hands of Minoo Masani, then the leader of CSP, in which malicious attacks on the CSP and many of its leaders had been made, and the strategy of sabotaging the CSP from within was laid bare". It is an irony of history that it is the social democracy which

will gobble up communism all over the world. In brief, Marxism-Leninism provides no ideological alternative for this country in the midst of its present multiple crises.

BJP's Hindu Nationalism

The other ideological current in India is that of "Hindu nationalism", propounded by the BJP. With nearly one-fifth of the electorate supporting it, this has assumed great importance. The BJP's spectacular electoral success in the recent elections has attracted world-wide attention.

The BJP as a political formation cannot be treated in isolation because it is a part of a broader movement conceived and directed by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). There are other branches of the movement, but the best known among them are the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), which shot into public prominence only in recent years on the issue of the Ramjanambhoomi Mandir at Ayodhya, and the Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh, which claims to be the second largest trade union federation in the country.

One of the most important reasons for the electoral success of the BJP was that the resources and manpower of all front organizations of the RSS were mobilized for the purpose. It has now been proved that these constitute the second largest political force in the country today. However, it would be a mistake to identify the RSS and the BJP completely because these are two entirely different kinds of organizations. While the RSS has its own philosophy of

"Hindutva", recruiting members and organizing multifarious activities, it is not a mass organization. It has its own 'internal vision of India', which it tries to promote.

Democratic Socialism

We have seen the inadequacy of the Gandhi-Nehru intellectual framework, which has been the conventional wisdom of the ruling establishment for the last four decades. The two ideological alternatives offered from the opposition, from the communists on the one hand and the BJP on the other, are not suitable either. So where do we go from here?

What could be the basis for the solution of India's vast and intricate economic, social, political and cultural problems? Nobody can deny the necessity of a comprehensive approach because it is no longer possible to tinker with the problems in a piecemeal manner. This calls for an ideological approach - a clear-cut vision of the society to be built, with its basic principles and values and also a program of action to fulfill them.

Democratic Socialism is to create the kind of man who ceases to be a manipulated object and becomes a conscious individual seeking fulfillment in personal spiritual enrichment combined with creative interaction with society. In socialism individual liberties are equally important as social goals. This is the broad framework of Democratic Socialism which could be the guideline for the solution of India's political, economic, social and cultural problems. One may ask: What is new in these ideas? In terms of ideas, there is nothing new, but the novelty in India will be in the change from verbal knowledge to firm convictions, commitment and practice.

Socialist Party (SPI)

It was heartening to read Bhai Vaidya's piece on SPI (Janata,

12 February 2012) and the rapid progress it is making. While we all wish it very well, I strongly feel that any democratic socialist party in India will succeed only when all its members preach as well as practise the eternal and universal principles of democratic socialism. It has to be "a party with a difference" even though real electoral success will come later than sooner. People should be able to say, "Hey! here is a party which is pragmatic but principled too. The major pitfall of the early socialists of our country was that they could not put the party before personalities. The new SPI will have a brilliant future, if it can build a party with modern organizing principles. The cadres have to be loyal and committed to the party - these two qualities can assiduously be developed with regular orientation, training, exposure and setting good examples and practices.

The new party should be ideologically sound, ethically stout, and organizationally solid. As I have been writing on the critical need of a solid party organization, I urge that the party should be based on committed cadres, but should be able to reach out to everybody in the society one way or the other; class consensus should be the preferred approach in place of class conflict. Inequalities are function of a system, rather than essential and inherent intolerance by one against the other. It is Gandhi, not Marx that one should listen to, in this context, while Marx was correct in exposing the inequalities; he fell desperately short of building and rebuilding a society as he ignored several other variables and dynamics influencing societal behavior. A thorough discussion on such ideologues is the key to building a party.

The other side of life

Harsh Mander

Late last year, two young men decided to live a month of their lives on the income of an average poor Indian. One of them, Tushar, the son of a police officer in Haryana, studied at the University of Pennsylvania and worked for three years as an investment banker in the US and Singapore. The other, Matt, migrated as a teenager to the States with his parents, and studied in MIT. Both decided at different points to return to India, joined the UID Project in Bengaluru, came to share a flat, and became close friends.

The idea suddenly struck them one day. Both had returned to India in the vague hope that they could be of use to their country. But they knew the people of this land so little. Tushar suggested one evening — “Let us try to understand an ‘average Indian’, by living on an ‘average income’.” His friend Matt was immediately captured by the idea. They began a journey which would change them forever.

To begin with, what was the average income of an Indian? They calculated that India's Mean National Income was Rs. 4,500 a month, or Rs. 150 a day. Globally people spend about a third of their incomes on rent. Excluding rent, they decided to spend Rs. 100 each a day. They realised that this did not make them poor, only average. Seventy-five per cent Indians live on less than this average.

The young men moved into the tiny apartment of their domestic help, much to her bemusement. What

changed for them was that they spent a large part of their day planning and organising their food. Eating out was out of the question; even dhabas were too expensive. Milk and yoghurt were expensive and therefore used sparingly, meat was out of bounds, as were processed food like bread. No ghee or butter, only a little refined oil. Both are passionate cooks with healthy appetites. They found soy nuggets a wonder food — affordable and high on proteins, and worked on many recipes. Parle G biscuits again were cheap: 25 paise for 27 calories! They innovated a dessert of fried banana on biscuits. It was their treat each day.

Living on Rs.100 made the circle of their life much smaller. They found that they could not afford to travel by bus more than five km in a day. If they needed to go further, they could only walk. They could afford electricity only five or six hours a day, therefore sparingly used lights and fans. They needed also to charge their mobiles and computers. One Lifebuoy soap cut into two. They passed by shops, gazing at things they could not buy. They could not afford the movies, and hoped they would not fall ill.

However, the bigger challenge remained. Could they live on Rs. 32, the official poverty line, which had become controversial after India's Planning Commission informed the Supreme Court that this was the poverty line for cities (for villages it was even lower, at Rs. 26 per person per day)?

For this, they decided to go to Matt's ancestral village Karucachal in Kerala, and live on Rs. 26. They ate parboiled rice, a tuber and banana and drank black tea: a balanced diet was impossible on the Rs. 18 a day which their briefly adopted ‘poverty’ permitted. They found themselves thinking of food the whole day. They walked long distances, and saved money even on soap to wash their clothes. They could not afford communication, by mobile and internet. It would have been a disaster if they fell ill. For the two 26-year-olds, the experience of ‘official poverty’ was harrowing.

Yet, when their experiment ended with Deepavali, they wrote to their friends: “Wish we could tell you that we are happy to have our ‘normal’ lives back. Wish we could say that our sumptuous celebratory feast two nights ago was as satisfying as we had been hoping for throughout our experiment. It probably was one of the best meals we've ever had, packed with massive amounts of love from our hosts. However, each bite was a sad reminder of the harsh reality that there are 400 million people in our country for whom such a meal will remain a dream for quite some time. That we can move on to our comfortable life, but they remain in the battlefield of survival — a life of tough choices and tall constraints. A life where freedom means little and hunger is plenty...

It disturbs us to spend money on most of the things that we now consider excesses. Do we really need that hair product or that branded

cologne? Is dining out at expensive restaurants necessary for a happy weekend? At a larger level, do we deserve all the riches we have around us? Is it just plain luck that we were born into circumstances that allowed us to build a life of comfort? What makes the other half any less deserving of many of these material possessions, (which many of us consider essential) or, more importantly, tools for self-

development (education) or self-preservation (healthcare)?

We don't know the answers to these questions. But we do know the feeling of guilt that is with us now. Guilt that is compounded by the love and generosity we got from people who live on the other side, despite their tough lives. We may have treated them as strangers all our lives, but they surely didn't treat us

as that way..."

So what did these two friends learn from their brief encounter with poverty? That hunger can make you angry. That a food law which guarantees adequate nutrition to all is essential. That poverty does not allow you to realise even modest dreams. And above all — in Matt's words — that empathy is essential for democracy.

Aman Biradari - The Hindu

National Jan Sansad During Budget Session in New Delhi

The Lokshakti Abhiyan ended in Nagpur with a meeting of activists from 12 states at Vinoba Vihar Kendra, Sarvodaya Ashram and decided to hold a national Jan Sansad in New Delhi from March 19th-23rd during the Budget Session of the Parliament. Activists working on land rights, anti-corruption, mining, SEZs and other peoples' movements from across the country have pledged to join the Jan Sansad in large number in Delhi as a step towards a true people's democracy.

Key issues

- Communities' control over land, water, forest and minerals, development planning and alternative development.
- Unorganised sector workers, urban poor, against inequality and towards equity and community
- electoral politics and people – electoral reforms

programme

- March 19 : Lokshakti Abhiyan Programmes discussion at three locations in Delhi
- March 20 – 22 : Jan Sansad on the key issues
- March 22 – 23 : Adoption of Jan Sansad Resolution and March to parliament

Lokshakti Abhiyan went to several villages and towns in Maharashtra and Goa where many of the struggles have not been reported in the national media thought they have been going on for years. It is important that news about these struggles is disseminated to everyone and we lend solidarity to smaller struggles. One of the ways in which the State has reared its oppressive hammer to squash protest is by taking over mainstream media and imprisoning people who raise questions or fight for the rights of their communities. It is important to fight for the release of all our comrades like Soni Sori, Lingaram Kodopi, Bhagawati Sahu, Kartam Joga, Sukhnath Oyami and many others languishing in jail as political prisoners. Such a struggle is necessary to uphold our democratic right to freedom and voice our opinions publically. The struggle over livelihood, land rights, housing rights, anti-capitalist agendas, mega developmental projects must continue unabated and the slogans of our struggle must be heard in all corners of our subcontinent and beyond so that such exploitation does not continue unchecked.

—National Alliance of Peoples Movement

Register Cases Against Revenue Officials for Forging Documents

Criminal cases under 409, 419, 420, 467 and 468 of IPC should be registered against Revenue Officials of Chaurai Tehsil, Chhindwada district for changing forest land (*Chhote Jhad ka Jungle*) into grassland. The Patwari, Tehsildar and SDM of Chaurai in collusion with DM Chhindwada have fabricated the revenue documents. The allocation of land to Adani's Power Project should be cancelled and the illegal construction done by Adani must be removed immediately as the project was not given environmental clearance by the Ministry of Environment and Forest. The Ministry has also not given NoC to change the category of land. Corruption is involved in the transfer of 20 hectare of land to Adani group and, therefore, the whole issue needs to be investigated by Economic Offence Wing.

- Dr. Sunilam,

Working President,
Kisan Sangharsh Samiti

Unethical and Illegal Drug Trials

Supreme Court admitted on February 6 a PIL filed by Swasthya Adhikar Manch about illegal and unethical clinical trials conducted on adults, children and even mentally ill patients in the country. A notice was issued to respondents, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI), Medical Council of India (MCI) and State of Madhya Pradesh by the bench of Justice R. M. Lodha and Justice H. L. Gokhale. The advocate for the petitioner is Pukhram Ramesh Kumar and the case was argued by Sanjay Parekh.

Today multi-national drug companies are very powerful and are making profits. After the patent amendment came, pursuant to WTO, amendments were also made in the Drug and Cosmetic Rules in 1995 in our country permitting multi-centric trials, including of Phase-I trial, which is the first trial of the new drug on human beings. For the purpose of clinical trials, these drug companies hire Contract Research Organizations (CRO) - more than 100 CROs exist in our country -, who claim that they will be able to get the clinical trials done at a low cost and quickly. The trials are conducted in the countries which are vulnerable because of poverty and other reasons. In conducting these trials, the doctors, with the sole aim of making money, grossly compromise with ethical medical practices which lead to trial subjects to face either death or serious side effects. The PIL has also taken the reference of EOW (Economic Offence Wing) report where many irregularities have been found during

investigation of drug trials conducted in the M.G.M. Medical College, Indore. It has been highlighted in the PIL that the irregularities like, principal investigator being a member of ethical committee, violation of the ethical guidelines by principal investigator, inactive role played by ethical committees, compensation to patients for adverse effects not being paid, etc. are a serious violation of laws and medical profession ethics and also a violation of Article 32 of the constitution..

Swasthya Adhikar Manch hence through petition has requested the court for direct investigation into the cases of adverse effects of drug trials including deaths and submission of the report to the Honorable Court, examine the present legal set up and guidelines concerning the clinical trials, direct the Government of Madhya Pradesh to act on report of EOW, grant of compensation and other reliefs including medical treatment to trial patients adversely affected.

The petitioners asked for an extensive investigation into the matter of drug trials which has accounted for a total of 1727 deaths from year 2007 to 2010 as accepted in Rajya Sabha by the Health Minister Gulam Nabi Azad. The petition calls the attention of the judiciary to innumerable drug trials conducted all over the nation which roughly amounts to about 4066 clinical drug trial experiments. 3138 of the trials were conducted in the year 2006-2009, 806 trials conducted from Jan 2010 to December 2010 and 928 drug trials are conducted in the year 2011. (The data has been taken from the statement made by Gulam Nabi

Azad in Rajya Sabha and from RTI replies received by the petitioner). In Andhra Pradesh about 25,000 women have been subjected to such drug trials.

The Advocate for the petitioner Sanjay Parekh pleaded the matter of unethical drug trial to be of grave concern to entire nation with prevailing ambiguity of the rules and regulations governing such trials, consequently giving enough space for these companies to engage in their unethical and illegal intentions. The petitioners pleaded with the Supreme Court to issue orders to the respective departments for reviewing the existing rules of governing such drug trials and bringing in the desired amendments. It was also pleaded that the systematic investigation be ordered in the all incidences of drug trial suffering from such irregularities. Taking cognizance of the matter, the apex court has issued notices to respective departments and organizations to submit their response.

– **Amulya Nidhi, Chinmay Mishra, Belu George**

**Janata
Subscription**
Annual Rs. : 260/-
Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on
Mumbai Bank
in favour of
JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai 400 007

Highlights of Report on candidates in U.P.

Out of the 248 candidates analyzed for the 5th phase of Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections, 76 candidates or 31 % declared criminal cases against them. In 2007 assembly elections for the whole of Uttar Pradesh, 27% candidates had declared criminal cases against themselves.

Every major party has given tickets to candidates who have declared criminal cases. SP has 24 out of 48 (50 %), INC has 14 out of 48 (29 %), BJP has 13 out of 47 (28 %), BSP has 12 out of 49 (24 %), JD(U) has 6 out of 24 (25 %), Bundelkhand Congress has 4 out of 13 (31 %), Peace Party has 2 out of 12 (17 %) and Apna Dal has 1 out of 6 (17%) candidates with declared criminal cases.

Out of the 76 candidates with declared criminal cases, 35 have declared serious criminal cases like murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, robbery, extortion etc. SP has 12, INC has 8, BJP has 5, BSP has 5, Bundelkhand Congress has 3, Peace Party has 1 and JD (U) has 1 such candidate.

Among these Ram Veer Singh of SP, contesting from Jasrana constituency has declared maximum number of criminal cases. He has declared 18 criminal cases including 8 charges related to murder. He is followed by Rameshwar Singh (SP, Aliganj constituency) who has declared 27 criminal cases including 5 charges related to murder and Hari Om (SP, Sirsaganj constituency) has declared 16 criminal cases including 6 charges related to murder.

Among other major parties, the following candidates have declared the highest number of serious

criminal cases against them: Manish Yadav Pataray of BSP (contesting from Jaswantnagar) has declared 15 cases against himself including 6 charges related to murder; Keshav Babu (of INC contesting from Hamirpur) has declared 6 cases against himself including 2 charges related to kidnapping; Ashok Kumar Singh (of Peace Party contesting from Hamirpur constituency) has declared 9 cases against himself including 4 charges related to murder.

A total of 118 candidates out of 248 analyzed i.e. 47% were crorepatis. In 2007, there were 22% crorepati candidates.

The candidates with maximum assets in 5th Phase is Balvir Singh IND from Govindnagar constituency with assets worth Rs. 47.80 Crores followed by Brijendra Kumar Vyas of INC from Jhansi Nagar with Rs. 24.09 Crores and Rajendra Kumar Yadav of INC from Babina constituency with assets worth Rs. 22.88 crores.

Three candidates have declared assets of less than 1 lakh and Mahendra of Bundelkhand Congress from Babina has declared zero assets.

A total of 97 (39%) candidates out of 248 analyzed declared liabilities of Rs. 5 Lakhs or above.

Among major parties, the average asset per candidate for BSP is 1.54 Crore, for INC is 3.74 Crore, for SP is 2.28 Crore, for BJP is 2.17 Crore, for JD(U) is 1.19 crores, for Peace Party is 41.83 Lacs, for Bundelkhand Congress is 36.39 Lacs, for Apna Dal is 26.21 Lacs, and for RLD is 3.26 Lacs.

61% candidates (153 of 248 analyzed) were graduates and above.

Out of 840 candidates contesting for 5th phase of Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections 2012, only 90 (11%) candidates are women; the number of women candidates for BSP is 4 out of 49, for BJP it is 9 out of 49, INC it is 4 out of 48 and SP it is 5 out of 49.

Highlights asset increase of re-contesting MLAs in the 5th Phase

Number of re-contesting MLAs analyzed for 5th phase Assembly Elections— 26

The average asset of these MLAs as declared in 2007 is Rs 1,35,87,256 (1.35 crores).

The average asset of these MLAs as declared in 2012 is, Rs 3,06,77,009 (3.07 crore).

Average asset growth for these re-contesting MLAs is Rs 1,70,89,752 (1.70 crore).

Average percentage growth in assets for these MLA is 126 %.

Jayveer Singh of BSP from Karhal has shown the highest asset increase of Rs. 5.99 Crores (from 2.19 crores in 2007 to 8.19 crores in 2012). He is followed by Satish Mahana of BJP from Maharajpur constituency with an asset increase of Rs. 3.78 Crores (from 3.48 crores in 2007 to 7.26 crores in 2012) and Ashok Yadav of JD(U) from Sirsaganj who showed an asset increase of 3.39 crores (from 3.12 crores in 2007 to 6.51 crores in 2012)

The highest percentage increase (6021%) has been for Mahendra Singh Rajpoot of BSP from Etawah
(Continued on Page 14)

constituency. His assets rose from 5.25 lakhs in 2007 to 3.21 crores in 2012. He is followed by Mamtesh of BSP from Amanpur constituency with an increase of 608% (15.87 lakhs in 2007 to 1.12 crores in 2012) and Alok Kumar of SP from Mainpuri constituency whose assets rose 560% (from 17.54 lakhs in 2007 to 1.16 crore in 2012).

Highlights ITR and PAN details

Saeed Mustfa Shervani (INC) has the highest annual income at Rs. 65.84 Lakhs followed by Jay Veer Singh (BSP) at Rs. 54.56 Lakhs, Nandram Sonker (INC) at Rs. 46.62 Lakhs and Deepnarayan Singh (SP) at Rs. 45.02 Lakhs as per their last filed Income Tax Returns.

A total of 65 candidates (26%) out of the 249 candidates analyzed by the Uttar Pradesh Election Watch have declared that they have never filed income tax returns.

Out of the 65 candidates analyzed who have never filed income tax returns, JD(U) has the maximum number of candidates 13 (54%) out of 24 candidates, followed by SP 13 (27%) out of 48 candidates, INC has 10 (21%) out of 48 candidates, BJP has 10 (21%) out of 47 candidates, Bundelkhand Congress has 7 (54%) out of 13 candidates, BSP has 5 (10%) out of 49 candidates, Peace Party has 3 (23%) out of 13 candidates, Apna Dal has 3 (50%) out of 6 candidates who have not filed IT Returns.

Top 3 candidates with maximum assets but who have never filed IT returns are Ranjeet Suman of SP contesting from Jalesar (SC) has the highest total assets of Rs. 2.41 crores, followed by Ram Ratan of BJP from Latitpur with assets of Rs. 1.49 crores and Amit Gaurav of SP

Forgotten Heroes of Yesteryears

S. Ramesh

Though the people of India got freedom from the autocratic rule of Britishers on 15th August, 1947, the people of erstwhile Hyderabad State under the regime of Nizam the 'trusted ally' of Britishers got freedom only on 17th September, 1948 after Police Action i.e. exactly after 13 months. Hence the people in this part of region popularly known as Telangana celebrate independence twice in a year - one on 15th August for having India got independence and the another on 17th September for Hyderabad's liberation from the despotic rule of the Nizam. Since then the people of the then Hyderabad State now comprising of 8 districts of Telangana celebrate 17th September as "Liberation Day of Hyderabad".

The Razakar movement which unleashed terror in the minds of innocent people will never be forgotten by the people of this part of country - Telangana. Kasim Razvi, the leader, recruited Razakars to create disturbances throughout the State of Hyderabad. It was actively supported by the Nizam with arms and money. Deen Yar Jung, the Head of the Nizam's Police used to prepare plans for the spread of the Razakar movement.

Innocent people were made to stand and were shot dead. Hundreds of women without consideration of age were captured and molested in broad day light. In fact, children were tossed and flung to the ground. Houses were looted and burnt. Villagers fleeing for fear of death were caught and hurled into flames.

In a period from December, 1947 to September, 1948 there were nearly 150 incidents of Razakar atrocities.

Those who raised the voice against the Razakars or the Nizam were ruthlessly crushed, put behind bars, or even killed mercilessly. In fact from the day of Indian independence till the Liberation of Hyderabad State i.e. from 15th August, 1947 to 17th September, 1948 may be called Black Days in the annals of India's Freedom Struggle.

Yet, the heroic struggle of the patriots of this part of region to liberate people from the clutches of despotic rule of Nizam and the Razakars in particular is missing in the pages of history. The people of the then Hyderabad state had to struggle not only with the Britishers but with the Nizam, a trusted ally of the Britishers, as well.

It was in the year 1857, during the first Indian War of Independence or the so-called Sepoy Mutiny, the Nizam stood firmly on the side of the British. The Britishers were so pleased that they returned the districts of Raichur (now in Karnataka State) and Osmanabad (now in Maharashtra) to the Nizam. These districts had been previously transferred to the British by the Nizam Naser-ud-daula to tide over financial crisis.

The Sepoy Mutiny had a strong echo in the Hyderabad State. There was a great agitation in Hyderabad. Pamphlets inciting people to rebel

against the British were distributed and posters pasted on the walls. Thousands of Rohillas under the leadership of Turrebaz Khan and Maulvi Alla-ud-din attacked the British Residency with fire arms. About 25 Rohilla agitators were killed. Turrebaz Khan was arrested but he escaped from captivity. At Toopran in Medak District he was shot dead by the Nizam's Police. Maulvi All-ud-din was also arrested and sent to Andaman jail and was imprisoned till his last breath.

The role played by Adivasi Gond tribals of the forests of Adilabad district, a part of the then Nizam's dynasty of Hyderabad during the early 20th century against the tyrannical rule of the Nizam hardly finds any mention in the history of Hyderabad Freedom struggle. Thanks are due to the Director Alluri Sreedhar for making a Cinema on the life of Komram Bheem, leader of the Adivasi Gond Tribals, a few years ago which won many awards including coveted Nandi Award. Only after that recently the Government of Andhra Pradesh agreed to install the statue of Komram Bheem as a tribute to the Adivasi Tribals.

Komram Bheem got inspiration from the life of Alluri Seetharama Raju. When he came to know about the hanging to death of Bhagath Singh he vowed to fight against the Asaf Jahi Dynasty for the liberation of Hyderabad. He formed a team of about hundred and odd Gonds and appealed them not to pay any cess to the Nizam's government and instead revolt against the Nizam for his unjustified levy of cess on the poor tribals living in the forests. He took to task the Nizam's officials and gave them the taste of muscle. To evade police arrest he fled to

Chanda and Pune districts, now in Maharashtra, only to come back after some years fully prepared to revolt against the Nizam.

Talukdar Abdul Sattar after coming to know Bheem's comeback warned him several times to desist from his struggle. But Bheem never budged an inch from his stand and took cudgels against the Nizam's soldiers. Infuriated Talukdar Abdul Sattar, well equipped with hundreds of police armed with guns attacked the hide-outs of Komram Bheem at mid-night when every one were napping and shot dead at point blank hundreds of innocent and unarmed Adivasi Gond Tribals including their leader, Komram Bheem. Komram Bheem, even today is dear to Gonds who treat him as their hero.

In December, 1947 when the Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan was proceeding from his King Koti residence to Mecca Masjid for prayers, a bomb was hurled against the car but the Nizam escaped the attack unhurt. The perpetrators of this attack Narayana Rao Pawar, Gandayya, R.Jagdish and Konda Laxman Bapuji were awarded severe punishments.

Not only Hindus but many Muslims were against the Razakars for their boisterous activities. Many Muslims also started protesting and raising voice against the despotic Razakars. Against this background the leader of the Razakars, Kasim Razvi gave warning to the people at large that the hands of those who raise their voice against Razakars will be chopped off.

The editor of Imroze, a Urdu daily, Shoebullah Khan dared to write an article in his paper giving a brief account of the atrocities

being perpetrated by the Razakars, ignoring the warning. The Razakars brutally killed Shoebullah Khan on the main Kacheguda-Lingampally cross roads while going home after finishing his works in the night. His both hands were chopped off and as he ran in trepidation towards home which was very nearby a few Razakars wielding talwars encountered and stabbed him in the back mercilessly in front of his wife who just then was opening the door after hearing cries of her husband. Shoebullah fell on the feet of his wife breathing his last in agony.

The history of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle will not be complete unless the works of brave and heroic deeds of V.H.Desai are given prominent place. But, unfortunately the name of V.H.Desai is missing from the pages of history particularly of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle probably because he never wanted any publicity for his heroic deeds.

Shri Desai used to attend the meetings of Razakars usually convened late in the nights donning the clothes like Muslims and mingling among them and used to report to the newspapers outside Hyderabad.

The leaders of Razakars used to be aghast at seeing the full report of their speeches published in the newspapers outside Hyderabad. They used to ponder over how the news were being leaked and reached the media outside the State when they were taking all precautionary measures while holding meetings in secret.

One day he was caught red-handed in the toilet by some Muslims reported the matter to the

police. Desai was arrested and sent to Gulbarga jail where leaders like M.Channa Reddy, P.V.Narasimha Rao, Bhimsen Rao (who was later brutally killed in jail when one of a jail staff hit him hard on the head by a rod for disobeying orders) were also imprisoned.

He continued writing a jail journal 'The Democrat' which he used to circulate to all the jail inmates furtively. The papers and pen for writing were being supplied by a jail staff who incidentally happened to be a Muslim.

After liberation of Hyderabad in September, 1948 Shri Desai joined a government job but resigned after a few months to join a newspaper - Deccan Chronicle - as reporter. He represented several newspapers as Special Correspondent based in Hyderabad till he assumed charge as Hon. Principal of Bhavan's College of Communication & Management in the year 1978 which he continued till the year 2000 and resigned due to indifferent health.

During 1990s when S. Ramakrishnan, then Executive Secretary & Director General of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, visited Hyderabad and came to know about the jail journal - The Democrat, he was impressed by the journal and took initiative to publish the manuscript in a book-form.

The names of such selfless, fearless heroes of yesteryears like Turrebaz Khan, Maulvi Alla-ud-din, Komram Bheem, Shiebullah Khan and V.H.Desai, only to mention a few, are however missing in the pages of history of Struggle for Indian Freedom Movement thus making the history incomplete.

A Cameo of Suffering

The New Year met me with a tragic face. A call came through in the small hours of the morning from our (AVANI) office. The operator told me of a severely burnt young woman, admitted to the government hospital in Sangli. Could I go there and organize some help? The caller, informed that Kavita was her name and she was from the labour colony of Jayasingpur, a town 20 minutes south of Sangli. Her two daughters of 9 and 10 years are inmates of our residential school and hence the concern. Two younger children, a boy of four and a girl only of one and half years lived with her.

I rushed to the hospital's burns ward. The sister on duty asked me to go past the screen at the far end of the ward where she lay. Her body was swathed in white bandage. The hair all burnt, the face having the hue of greased coal. She appeared to be unconscious, or probably under sedation. I did not try to move closer and speak to her.

Then I searched out the doctor-in-charge. He told me of her being 75 percent burnt and no chance of survival. With the best of efforts she could prolong for three days, no more. As suggested by him, I gave to the duty nurse a bundle of bandages and a packet of syringes and I stood by her side for sometime. An hour later, Suneeta and Snehal of our school staff arrived on the scene. Kavita sensed their approach to her side and turned her head wincing in pain. Opened her peeling eyelids, complained of her chronic tippler husband, of endless quarrels and beatings, pleaded her helplessness and entreated them to look after her children and groom them properly.

"You are my only hope ...", her voice trailed. Next moment her breathing became faint and labored. The ward boy pushed the oxygen cylinder to her. By the time he could bring the nozzle close to her nose, her breathing had stopped. She let her Praan slip out of her charred body only after giving her children's charge to AVANI.

Kavita (meaning "a poem") barely of twentyeight summers and already a cameo of fathomless suffering was pushed to her tryst with flamy surcease. Ever jealous of her good looks, Kavita's husband has been a wastrel and she had to be the bread winner. Now the children are orphaned, because their father may well take another wife, which is as easy in their tribe as getting into a new shirt.

She has gone beyond recall. Yet in her children she abides. They need a healing touch and a breath of compassion. So that her aspirations shall bear fruit.

You will find a Kavita in every dwelling you turn to in the shanties which engirdle every urban centre. Many of them pull on precariously on powder kegs of disaster.

Ours is a society which aspires to be a great economic power a decade from now. It also boasts of parturating "the great middle class", at whom the automobile fabricators of the world are splurgingly slithering for a pythonic bash. But it will betray not a wisp of awareness of Kavita's predicament. Her burnt body is the blood plasmaic image of the epochal agony of the millions of her type. Will her death be in vain?

—Arun Chavan

Medha Patkar Refuses Basava Award

"It would have been an honour to receive this award in the name of revolutionary saint poet, philosopher Shri Basaveshwara of 12th century who promoted social change, reform and communal harmony. However, collective opinion of the movements I am associated with suggests that Karnataka Government has not been able to deal with the mining scam and other scandals. The Lokayukta controversy is not yet over and there are disagreements with people's movements on certain policies related to farmers, workers, unorganised sector workers, slum dwellers and government's attempt at privatisation and corporatisation of scarce natural resources like land, water, forests and minerals. I, therefore, would like to state with humility my inability to accept the award which you may be free to give to any other deserving activist." Medha Patkar said at a public meeting in Belgaum, Karnataka on February 7, 2012.

Department of Kannada and Culture of the Karnataka Government had announced bestowing the Basava Puraskar 2010 to Medha Patkar by a government notification dated December 3, 2011. Award contains a citation and Rs. 10 lakh for contribution towards social change and promotion of the principles which Saint Basaveshwara championed.

Medha Patkar was leading Lokshakti Abhiyan which started its fourth phase campaign on February 6th from Mumbai. The Abhiyan was joined by farmers, activists, academics from different states and will traveled through Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. The Lokshakti Abhiyan had already been through Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand.

- Seela Manswanee - Madhuresh Kumar

(Continued from Page 10)

from Marhara with Rs. 1.36 crores respectively.

36 (15%) candidates have not declared their PAN details of which JD (U) and SP have the maximum number of candidates (8) who have not declared their PAN details. INC has 6 out of 48, BJP has 5 out of 47, Bundelkhand Congress has 4 out of 13, Peace party has 2 out of 13, BSP, Apna Dal and RLD have 1 candidate each out of the candidates analyzed who have not declared their PAN

card details.

Top three candidates with maximum assets but not declared their PAN card details are Anil Kumar Sharma of INC contesting from Arya Nagar constituency has the highest assets with worth Rs. 3.76 Crores followed by Kamlesh of SP from Sikandra with assets of Rs. 1.14 crores and Mamtesh of BSP from Amanpur with Rs. 1.12 crores respectively.

—Uttar Pradesh Election Watch



Rural India Focus


PRESENTING THE NATION WITH A REPLICABLE MODEL OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT



ADIVASI GIRLS HOSTEL AT TARA, PANVEL



WEEKLY EYE CAMPS AT THE YMC HOSPITAL, TARA, PANVEL



RUNS THREE HIGH SCHOOLS

YUSUF MEHERALLY CENTRE AND YOU

There are ways in which you can join the YMC movement in bringing education, healthcare, women empowerment, employment generation, relief and growth to our rural villages. Visit our Centre, volunteer your help, buy our products, become a Life Member. You could also support the cause by donating to our various initiatives.

SPONSOR AN ADIVASI GIRL'S HOSTEL STAY

It takes Rs.15,000 per year to meet the expenses for supporting a girl child's stay at the hostel in Tara, Panvel Taluka.



Yusuf Meherally Centre
D-15, Ganesh Prasad, 1st Floor,
Naushir Barucha Marg,
Grant Road (West),
Mumbai 400 007

FINANCE A CATARACT SURGERY

10 to 15 eye operations are performed at the weekly eye camp held at the Maharashtra State Government funded hospital building. Sponsor a cataract operation for Rs. 15,000/-.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE SCHOOL CORPUS

YMC runs 3 high schools - 2 Marathi, 1 Urdu medium. With only 2 of these on government aid, the Centre needs Rs. 1 crore as corpus to run the 3rd and maintain, conduct extra-curricular activities in all 3 and finance its building expansion plans. Give generously.

Visit www.yusufmeherally.org,
Call: (022)-2387 0097,
Fax: (022)-2388 9738 or
E-mail : yusufmeherally@gmail.com

*With Best Compliments
From*



APNA BAZAR CO-OP.

MUMBAI KAMGAR MADHYAWARTI GRAHAK SAHAKARI SANSTHA MARYADIT
(Multi-State Consumer Co-operative Society)
Govindji Keni Road, Naigaon, Dadar (East), Mumbai-400 014.

MAIN CHARACTERISTIC

- 60 YEARS SERVICE IN CONSUMER SECTOR
- ONLY ONE MULTI-STATE CONSUMER CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY IN INDIA
- MORE THAN 40 RETAIL OUTLETS
- ANNUAL TURNOVER IS 100 CRORES
- 15 LACS LOYAL CUSTOMERS
- AWARD WINNER OF JAMNALAL BAJAJ UCHIT VYAVHAR [1989 & 2001]

➤ **HEALTH SERVICES**

- ★ DADA SARFARE AROGYA KENDRA - NAIGAON
- ★ H. N. PATIL AROGYA KENDRA - VASHI
- ★ FREE HEALTH CAMPS
- ★ MARKETING THE PRODUCTS OF SMALL PRODUCERS

APNA BAZAR FOR ALL



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 67 No. 5
February 26, 2012

Consensus needed on NCTC

S.Viswam

A historic bus journey
Kuldip Naya

Whither Indian Politics
Rajindar Sachar

Whither Bharat?
Towards a strategy for
widening the frontiers
of democratic struggle
Bijay

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

We were being assured throughout last week by New Delhi-dated news reports in many newspapers that the Prime Minister intended to assume full control even if only to debunk the widely-held notion that he was ineffective. As if to confirm these reports, the Prime Minister has intervened in time, for a change, in a situation created by a raging controversy over the setting up of the much-talked-about National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) which pitted the Home Minister and his Ministry against as many as nine State Chief Ministers. The Prime Minister has, in the process of intervening in the controversy, shown that the reports of his ineffectiveness have cut him to the quick and from now onwards he intends to be more assertive and vigilant. Good luck to him and good luck to us, but even more good luck to the country. The idea to set up an institution like the NCTC has been in the air for long. It was neither hailed as a timely proposal nor disdained as a wasteful effort. Indeed, nobody seems to have taken it seriously, which, again is par for the course as the reigning government at Delhi has lost all credibility.

However, when it became known a few days ago that the proposal was

being implemented in all seriousness and that even the date for its launch, March 1, had been fixed chief ministers seemed to have been roused from their slumber. Beginning with West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee, chief ministers began protesting against the establishment of the NCTC one after another, till, at last count, nine CMs had joined the chorus. Their objection was two-fold. First, they had not been consulted, individually or collectively, and hence the move was arbitrary and undemocratic. Second, the setting up of an organization like the NCTC with wide powers to search and arrest was against the federal concept which was basic and fundamental to the Constitution. The power to search and arrest was one vested in the states and the Centre could not usurp these powers without doing violence to federalism and the Indian constitution. The Union Home Secretary poured oil on the troubled waters by proclaiming that there was no need to consult the chief ministers since nothing was being done to challenge or take away their powers. His cause went by default presumably for want of proper advocacy. A pronounced anti-government atmosphere was building up in the country when Dr. Manmohan Singh chose to intervene.

*Between the lines***A historic bus journey****Kuldip Nayar**

In a placatory letter to each of the concerned CMs, he pointed out that the government was not tinkering with the federalism concept nor was it altering the power structure between the Centre and the states. The idea was to co-ordinate counter-terrorism efforts throughout the country, as the Intelligence Bureau had been doing till now, which was why the NCTC was being located within the IB and not outside of it as a separate organization. He said he was asking Home Minister Chidambaram to address the concerns of the states. It would seem that the Home Secretary was right to the extent that since the NCTC was being set up under the existing provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), no new measure was being launched. The UAPA was already a measure approved by all states. Now, the ball is in Chidambaram's court and he has to establish rapport and conviction with the CMs if he wants the NCTC to get off the ground.

So, in effect, a controversy was allowed to be generated and encouraged to snowball into a crisis situation because the Centre failed to consult the states on a measure which impinged on their rights and privileges under the Constitution. The proper course would have been for the Home Ministry to have convened a state chief ministers' or home ministers' conference and placed the details of the proposal before them. Indeed, as the PM has pointed out in his letter to the CMs, the government had no sinister motives.

The entire episode has demonstrated the fact that the trust deficit between the Centre and the States has widened enormously. The Centre has failed to remain
(Continued on Page 3)

Thirteen is considered an unlucky number. But 13 years ago in February, 1999 something fortunate took place. This was the month when the then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee undertook a bus journey to Pakistan. His was a simple and straight message: Neighbours should never be distant. Yet it had taken some 52 years to span nearly 52 kilometers between Amritsar and Lahore.

It is the same border on which we have lighted candles since the 50th anniversary of India's independence. It is the same border, which I crossed after partition in September 1947. And I recall how we, a small group, stopped at the no-man's land to make way for people coming from the other side. They were Muslims, we the Hindus and the Sikhs. None spoke—neither they, nor we. But we understood each other, it was a spontaneous kinship. Both had seen murder and worse, both had been broken on the rack of history. We were refugees.

As the bus carrying Vajpayee and some of us rolled over to the Pakistan side, I felt a new beginning had been made. Whether we were making history or not, but we were conscious that it was in the making. Could we be path-breakers? The border bristling with fear and distrust had suddenly become normal. The police that always adopted a martial posture looked like sentinels standing at attention. Something had changed. It seemed as if the peoples

of the subcontinent, without giving up their separate identities, would work together for the common good. Would the bus be ushering in an era beyond their dreams—the faith in friendship to which I have clung in the sea of hostility and hatred that has for long engulfed the subcontinent.

Vajpayee's speech in Hindustani at the civic reception in Lahore evoked hope. It was the highest point of his 24-hour stay. He spoke from the heart as Pakistan foreign minister Sartaj Aziz put it. Vajpayee did not hide the feeling that he had been against partition. Many in his entourage did not want him to visit the Minar-e-Pakistan, built to commemorate the memory of March 23, 1940, when a resolution for the formation of Pakistan was endorsed at Lahore.

He not only resisted the pressure not to visit the place but also declared that he wanted to allay the fears of those who believed that India had not accepted Pakistan. He wrote in the visitors' book: integrity of Pakistan was sine qua non for India's unity. Vajpayee was at his best, poetic in expression and lofty in thoughts. He assured the Pakistanis that the "outstanding problem of Kashmir" would be resolved peacefully. What he said implied that it was a dispute, which must be settled—something which even liberal Pakistanis have wanted New Delhi to commit.

Surely, the Pakistanis were not serious when they linked Vajpayee's

visit to a solution on Kashmir. They deluded themselves if they believed that the 51-year-old problem could be sorted out in 24 hours. That Vajpayee described more than once Jammu and Kashmir as a problem showed how far he has travelled from his earlier stand that JK was an integral part of India. It meant he was talking in terms of give and take. I was glad that Nawaz Sharif said more or less the same thing while declaring that the “traditional stand” on outstanding problems would have to be changed. Recently, Prime Minister Yousuf Reza Gilani has said that Kashmir will be sorted out through a dialogue.

I was surprised over a proposal by Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Nawaz, brother of then Pakistan Prime Minister, to Prakash Singh Badal, Chief Minister of India’s Punjab at the breakfast. Shahbaz suggested that India could take Jammu and give Kashmir to Pakistan. The reason why it was not acceptable to New Delhi was the division on the basis of religion. India is a pluralistic society. It cannot accept the thesis that the Muslim-majority Kashmir should go to the Islamic state of Pakistan and the Hindu-majority Jammu to India. This would give a fatal blow to the policy of secularism that India upheld. Some other formula has to be worked out, which includes the say of Kashmiris. Both countries have suffered enough from partition on the basis of religion. For them to go back to the days of religious divide is to invite disaster.

Islamabad has disappointed me by not reciprocating New Delhi’s offer of no-first use of nuclear weapons. The argument that they give equality to Pakistan, which is weaker in conventional weapon

war, is fallacious. The bomb has, in fact, ruled out wars between India and Pakistan. Can Islamabad use it on India without exposing itself to the consequences of the fallout? Even if Pakistan could not afford to have a non-first-use pact because of domestic compulsions, it could have had a no-war pact. This would not have jeopardized its defence in any way. Had Vajpayee and Sharif signed such a pact a sense of relief would have swept across the subcontinent. The two countries could have then been cut their military expenditure and divert funds to education, health and hunger, the vision to which Vajpayee referred during his speech.

Maybe, the two countries will work towards that in the days to come. The core problem is trust and confidence, not Kashmir. That has to be built first. With all its deficiencies, the Lahore declaration opened up many avenues for cooperation and amity. There was an opportunity for the two countries to generate goodwill, which would help them solve all outstanding problems. But it was unfortunate that the atmosphere built by Vajpayee’s visit and Nawaz Sharif’s generous approach was allowed to be dissipated and events meandered to the same old situation.

Why Kargil? Was it a diabolical conspiracy of an ambitious General? All that I have heard by the way of explanation is that Nawaz Sharif was also on board. This is not true. I have talked to him at length and found that he had no prior knowledge of infiltration.

Why was the Lahore process disturbed? Some intellectuals had the answer. Pakistan was not ready for it. No groundwork had been done. The nation was suddenly asked to switch off the anti-India feeling

which it had nourished for years. This was not possible overnight. Many made the same point as former Prime Minister Inder Gujral does: the breakthrough in India-Pakistan relations will not be an event; it has to be evolved.

During the Kargil misadventure, Nawaz Sharif wanted to come to India to meet Vajpayee. It was not possible because India did not consider Sharif’s presence politic when a fierce battle was raging at the Kargil heights. He went to Washington. The rest is history.

(Continued from Page 2)

in the confidence of the states and instead has acquired their distrust. This situation needs to be rectified. Dr. Manmohan Singh needs to exert himself even more to regain the lost confidence. And, needless to say, where issues like terrorism and counter-terrorism are concerned he needs to strive for national consensus on strategies. It would be unwise to dismiss the concern of the states. The issue affects them vitally.

Madhu Dandavate

By

B. Vivekanandan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007.

Whither Indian Politics

Rajindar Sachar

Democracy is a basic feature of our Constitution. Parliament and legislative assemblies are instruments created to give effect to the democratic content of people governing themselves. Political parties are the medium through which representatives are elected. It stands to reason that after the election, the implementation of the principles and policies continue or should continue to govern the programme. That is of course textbook teaching; but how close are these sound principles to the reality of the present politics.

A mini general election with the largest state of U.P. going to the polls seems apt time to have a clear look at the way our political parties treat the elections and the social and political philosophy to woo the voters.

The minimum test for a candidate should certainly be that he/she is not foul of criminal law. That is why the Supreme Court as far back as 2002 in a writ petition filed by Peoples Union for Civil Liberties directed that a proposed candidate should disclose whether there is a criminal charge sheet against him at least 6 months before the date of election, so that the voter may try to avoid politicalisation of criminals, in the sense that criminals should not be elected so as to prevent them from wielding power over the reins of state. But alas, India continues to remain a mystery to not only the foreigners, but even to us, because we find that the political parties still continue to warmly welcome the criminal elements to their bosoms.

Thus of 337 candidates (upto 5th phase) for U.P. election, about 32% belonging to parties S.P., B.S.P., Congress, B.J.P. , have serious criminal charges pending against them.

This, notwithstanding the warning of criminal elements in our legislatures given by the Vice President of India at All India Whips' Conference, "Exactly 23% of MPs elected in 2004 had criminal cases registered against them – over half of these cases could lead to imprisonment of five years or more. The situation is worse in the case of MLA's". Contrast it with Europe – (Not that I am fond of political standards in Europe). But recently President of German Republic resigned because he had threatened a person who was demanding loan given to the President or in England where a cabinet minister resigned because he made his wife take the blame for rash driving when he himself was driving the car. How ironical that all the major political parties in India are resisting the framing of law debarring persons charged with criminal offences from contesting elections.

Another grim reality of the present elections in Punjab and U.P. is the amount of illegal money circulating and the distribution of drugs and liquor, the danger of which the present Chief Election Commissioner has highlighted and election expenses are mentioned to have gone up to three to five crores per seat. Is it not farcical to call these elections free and fair?

No party is talking of real problems. Minorities are being treated as football of this small politics. An unacceptable competition of claiming to be custodians of minorities is being displayed by some parties by pressing the panic button of security while on the contrary some parties are donning the artificial garb of nationalism. This is insulting the minorities. They are nobody's pawns. They are equal, proud citizens of India. Parties who behave in such a manner are ignoring the well established code of universal human rights which proclaims, "In any country the faith and the confidence of the minorities in the impartial and even functioning of the State is the acid test of being a civilized State. This is accepted wisdom."

The real problems overwhelming the electorate are many and yet there is conspiratorial silence from all the parties. A report by Save the Children (an N.G.O.) shows that more than 100 million children in our country have not enough to eat; 24 percent of families say their children go without food for one day – what a tragic mockery that Central Government is resisting PUCL petition in the Supreme Court for the right to food for all on the specious plea of lack of funds, while merrily and proudly proclaiming its purchase 126 Jet Fighter aircrafts for thousands of crores of rupees. This perverse priority is further heightened by the admission of Central Government Minister that India accounts for 60 percent open defecation in the world

– the reason being that building toilets requires Rs. 8000 each, but under the governments norms only Rs. 3000 is provided - can there be a more sardonic double talk. And yet no party is talking about these issues.

Of course all parties are talking with their wide mouths open of giving laptops, (Irony of untruth is so stark is when the fact is that 40 percent of India is not electrified); motor cycles to students, without batting an eyelid or feeling ashamed that large number of schools do not even have black boards or toilets for girl students.

In 2009 17368 farmers killed themselves. Agriculture growth, the mainstay of Indian economy, has remained stagnant for the last decade at 1.6 percent and it has now slipped to 0.4 percent. Planning Commission Report 2011 has had to admit the gross inequality of assets wherein top 5 percent possess 38 percent of total assets and bottom 60 percent owning a mere 13 percent. There is high incidence of poverty amongst SC/ST, and 1/3rd of Muslims live below the poverty line.

In spite of this dark reality, no major party in the elections even mentioned these vital issues – this shows an attitude of contempt like that of the old feudal master towards his serfs. This contempt towards the electorate can not be described better than what I chanced to see on my computer on blog posted by one teenager Sanil, thus: “It is time for the next elections and his previous promises have not begun. I am very young child and today I have learnt that you can call politics, corruption too.”

Parties should seriously heed the warning given by Babasaheb

(Continued on Page 6)

Highlights of Report on candidates for the 6th phase of Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections

Out of the 360 candidates analyzed, 128 candidates or 36 % declared criminal cases against them. In 2007 assembly elections for the whole of Uttar Pradesh, 27% candidates had declared criminal cases against themselves.

Amongst major parties, every party has given tickets to candidates who have declared criminal cases. SP has 31 out of 68 (46 %), BJP has 30 out of 67 (45 %), BSP has 20 out of 68 (29 %), INC has 16 out of 34 (47 %), RLD has 11 out of 32 (34 %), JD(U) has 10 out of 34 (29 %), Peace Party has 9 out of 46 (20 %), Quami Ekta Dal has 1 out of 3 (33 %) candidates with pending criminal cases.

Out of these 128 candidates with declared criminal cases, 52 have declared serious criminal cases like murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, rape, robbery, extortion etc. SP has 15, BJP has 8, BSP has 7, INC has 5, RLD has 6, JD(U) has 4 and Peace Party has 7 such candidates.

Among these Manveer Singh of JD(U), contesting from Jewar constituency, has declared maximum number of criminal cases. He has declared 31 criminal cases including 14 charges related to murder. He is followed by Pushpa Sharma (BSP, Mathura constituency) who has declared 19 criminal cases including 2 charges related to murder and 4 charges related to theft and Shribhagwan Sharma (SP, Debai constituency) has declared 13 criminal cases including 1 charge

related to murder and 1 charges related to rape.

Among other major parties, the following candidates have declared the highest number of serious criminal cases against them: 1) Bijendra Singh (of INC contesting from Atrauli) has declared 2 cases against himself including 2 charges related to illegal payments in connection with election. 2) Yogendra Upadhyaya (of BJP contesting from Agra South constituency) has declared 3 cases against himself including 1 charge related to murder.

A total of 210 candidates out of 360 analyzed i.e. 58% are crorepatis. In 2007, there were 22% crorepati candidates.

The candidates with maximum assets in 6th Phase is Najir Ahmed of INC from Agra South constituency with assets worth Rs. 141.39 Crores followed by Vinod Kumar of BSP from Debai with Rs. 45.19 Crores and Mahesh Kumar Sharma of BJP from Noida constituency with assets worth Rs. 37.45 crores.

6 Candidates have declared assets of less than 1 lakh and 3 candidates, less than Rs. 11000.

A total of 21 (6%) candidates out of 360 analyzed declared liabilities of Rs. 1 crore or above.

Among major parties, the average asset per candidate for BSP is 4.81 Crore, for INC is 8.73 Crore, for RLD is 4.02 crores, for SP is 3.78 Crore, for BJP is 3.62 Crore, for

JD(U) is 75.01 Lacs, for Peace Party is 56.11 Lacs, for Bundelkhand Congress is 11.49 Lacs and for Quami Ekta Dal is 2.86 Lacs.

52% candidates (186 of 360) are graduates and above.

Out of 1103 candidates contesting for 6th phase of Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections 2012, only 85 (8%) candidates are women.

Number of re-contesting MLAs analyzed – 49

The average asset of these MLAs as declared in 2007 was Rs 1,26,35,429 (1.26 crores).

The average asset of these MLAs as declared in 2012 is Rs 3,38,55,108 (3.38 crore).

Average asset growth for these re-contesting MLAs is Rs 2,12,19,678 (2.12 crore).

Average percentage growth in assets for these MLA is 168%.

Lakhi Ram Nagar of BSP from Kithore constituency has the highest increase in asset worth Rs.11.31 Crores (from 8.42 Crores in 2007 to 19.73 Crores in 2012), followed by Pooran Prakash of RLD from Baldev constituency with an asset increase of Rs. 6.63 Crores (from 27.1 Lakhs in 2007 to 6.9 Crores in 2012) and Madhusudan Sharma of BSP from Bah constituency with an asset increase of Rs. 4.95 Crores (from 3.66 Crores in 2007 to 8.61 Crores in 2012).

The highest percentage increase (3776%) has been for Satveer Singh Gujjar of BSP from Dadri constituency. His assets rose from 2.51 lakhs in 2007 to 97.48 lakhs in 2012. He is followed by Pooran Prakash of RLD from Baldev

constituency with a percentage increase of 2456% (27.01 lakhs in 2007 to 6.9 Crores in 2012) and Hazi Jameer Ullah of SP from Koil constituency with an increase of 1681% (6.00 lakhs in 2007 to 1.06 crores in 2012).

ITR and PAN

Najir Ahmed (INC) has the highest annual income at Rs. 22.69 Crore followed by Zafar Aalam (SP) at Rs. 1.55 Crore, Anil Kumar Tanwar (INC) at Rs. 1.43 Crore and Mahesh Kumar Sharma (BJP) at Rs. 1.38 Crore as per their last filed Income Tax Returns.

A total of 105 candidates (29%) out of the 360 candidates analyzed by the Uttar Pradesh Election Watch have declared that they have never filed income tax returns.

Out of the 105 candidates analyzed who have never filed income tax returns, JD(U) has the maximum number of candidates 18 (53% of the 34) followed by Peace Party with 22 (48% of the 46 candidates a), BJP with 15 (22% of the 67 candidates), RLD with 6 (19% of the 32 candidates), INC with 6 (18% of the 34) who have never filed ITR.

Top 3 candidates with maximum assets but who have never filed IT returns are Zakir Ali of BSP contesting from Loni has the highest total assets of Rs. 16.95 crores, followed by Syed Himayat Ali of SP from Anupshahar with assets of Rs. 9.87 crores and Mazahir Hasan of SP from Saharanpur Nagar with Rs. 6.52 crores respectively.

54 (15%) candidates have not declared their PAN details of which Peace Party has the maximum number of candidates (16) who

have not declared their PAN details. JD(U) has 10 out of 34, SP has 7 out of 68, BJP has 6 out of 67, Bundelkhand Congress has 5 out of 8, BSP has 4 out of 68, INC has 3 out of 34 and RLD has 2 out 32 candidates analyzed who have not declared their PAN card details.

Top three candidates with maximum assets but not declared their PAN card details are Jagat Singh of BSP contesting from Siwalkhas constituency has the highest assets with worth Rs. 3.66 Crores followed by Surendra Kumar Munni of INC from Muradnagar with assets of Rs. 2.72 crores and Vikram Singh of BJP from Saharanpur with Rs. 2.47 crores respectively.

- Uttar Pradesh Election Watch

(Continued from Page 5)

Ambedkar who on 26th November 1949, warned 'How long should we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life.....we must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from this inequality will blow at the structure of political democracy which this assembly has so laboriously built up'.

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on
Mumbai Bank
in favour of
JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai 400 007

Whither Bharat?

Towards a strategy for widening the frontiers of democratic struggle

Bijay

The current obsession of the rich and powerful is with the ‘growth rate’. According to the latest Forbes’ list, there are 1210 (1125 in 2008) billionaires in the world and their combined wealth is 4.5 (4.4 in 2008) trillion dollars, (7%) of the world’s GDP. There are 50 (53 in 2008) billionaires in India with their estimated wealth at 238.5 (340.9 in 2008) billion dollars is nearly 25% (31% in 2008) of the country’s total GDP. This gives them nearly three times more weight in the economy than their American counterparts and over ten times of those in China. The net worth of all the Chinese billionaires is just about 3% of the country’s GDP, while that of the US billionaires is nearly 11%. Some say, the total area of Special Economic Zones that is under the control of Ambanis in Maharashtra is almost the half of the total area of the Greater Mumbai. All those SEZs that have been sanctioned by the Government of India area-wise cover almost 7% of the total area of India. (The total tribal areas cover only 15% of India).

The Government, hamstrung by a current fiscal deficit of 1.5 lac crore is so fond of the rich that it has preferred to forego a staggering Rs.14,28,028 crore during the last three years from being legitimately collected as tax revenue. Of this, Rs.3, 63,875 crore have been only concessions to the corporates and the rich (People’s Democracy,2012). Moreover, there are large transfers disguised in the form of sums owed to the State by the corporate

sector which the State makes no serious attempt to collect. Large borrowers with 11,000 individual accounts accounted for as much as Rs 400 billion of total bad debt of banks by 2001-02. Among public sector banks too high-value defaults involving 1,741 accounts over Rs 50 million amounted to Rs 228.66 billion. (Even these may be understatements, since banks tend to ‘evergreen’ corporate loans, providing fresh loans in order to prevent default.) A second major subsidy is tax concessions. The total of tax revenue forgone on corporation tax, excise duty and customs duty was estimated at Rs 2.36 trillion in 2007-08, which was over half the total revenues actually connected under these heads in that year. The State also makes large land acquisitions on behalf of the private corporate sector, using the colonial-era Land Acquisition Act (1894). Even where the State pays what it calls the market rate for such land as it acquires, private firms stand to benefit greatly: for the market rate is calculated on the basis of sale prices of land in the previous period. Not many land sales take place in the period leading up to acquisition, and such sales as take place may understate the price in order to avoid stamp duty. (RUPE,2008) This characterizes our Indian state, as very aptly termed by the Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz as a “Corporate Welfare State”

On the other hand, this regime of the free market economic

policies had made the agriculture ruinous resulting in falling annual agricultural growth rates (an all time low of 0.6 per cent per year during 1994/95-004/05) return of usurious money lending (the non-institutional credit increased from 31 to 42 per cent of rural borrowing between 1991 and 2003(Shetty,2009); an official RBI committee has now charted out methods whereby rural moneylenders can be provided funds by the banks, and “incentivised” to reach credit to the financially excluded. The rulers have also been trumpeting microcredit as the answer to financial exclusion (RUPE,2008) farmer suicides. While the peasants grow the food items, they eventually face starvation and malnutrition, which is at the same level as the Sub-Saharan Africa. [The HUNGaMA(Fighting Hunger and Malnutrition) report-2012 reveals that 42% of India’s children under the age of 5 are underweight and 58% are suffering from stunted growth; nearly 58% of mothers of BIMAROU states feed water instead of breast milk to their infants until six months). Nearly 310 million people live under the officially defined poverty line.(Recently-released Human Development Report of the Planning Commission)]. Dal has almost vanished from the rural thali. The government prefers to import food items from abroad at a higher price than the price the Indian farmers offer. The minimum support price is kept depressed so that the agri-business companies reap a rich harvest.

The share of the agricultural sector in the GDP has been falling continuously during the last six decades of independent India - 1950-51 (55%); 1970-71 (44%); 1990-91(31%); 2000-01 (26%); 2001-02 (24%) and 2007-08 (17.5%)[Era Sezhiyan,2009] and it is now destined to nosedive at the rate of 1.5% so as to attain the desired 6% by 2020 as mandated by the India's vision paper. Compared with the steep fall in the share of the agriculture sector in GDP, the workforce depending on agriculture has only declined marginally from 72% in 1951 to 69% in 1991 to 58% in 2001 and 57% in 2004-05.(Byres 2003;Bino et al,2009). Between 1983 and 2007-08, agriculture's share in total employment came down from 63% to 53%, and it has since declined further(Mundle,2012). Government of India's own report says that about 77% of rural workforce earns maximum of 20 rupees per day. (The National Commission For Enterprises In The Unorganised Sector). Area under food-grains has fallen from 127 million hectares (1980-81) to 123 (2008-09) (Economic Survey, 2009-10). The Government of India proudly announces that nearly 40% of the farmers in India are not interested in farming(The New Agricultural Policy,2004). The per capita earning capacity in the agricultural sector has fallen to irretrievably low levels. The rising input price without commensurate rise in crop price is a major reason for lack of surplus generation - despite a firm assertion by Manmohan Singh in his budget speech of 1992-93 that "we must begin a new chapter in our agricultural history where farm enterprises yield not only more food, but more productive jobs and higher income in rural areas".

After almost a decade of such assertion, the government brought the New Agricultural Policy which intensifies the corporatisation of our agriculture.

The Government policies since the beginning are adversarial towards the agriculture (in terms of trade with the industry). It is considered that agriculture is not a skilled job. Therefore the wages in the agriculture sector are comparatively low and depressed. Even the Government documents indicate that 1.89 % of persons in rural areas work to maintain a family, while it is the single person for the organized sector. It is also a fact that public investment in agriculture (measured as a percentage of agricultural GDP) has been more than halved since the mid-1980s (fell from 38.97 in 1985-86 to 28.7 in 1990-91(1980-81 prices)[Purohit and Reddy,1999], from 20.5 in 2004-05 to 17.6 in2008-09 [Economic Survey,2009-10]. The price support 'safety net' has no meaning and relevance as the support prices are set too low and, more generally no proper system of implementation is in place (Deshpande,2008).

The neo-liberal policy changes from 1991 onwards also made farming more problematic, as the Indian agriculture was also used to operate within a shielded home market. But during the 1990s external trade in agricultural produce and inputs was liberalized, exposing Indian farmers to outside competition at fluctuating world market prices – prices that were falling from 1997 and that fell dramatically for products such as edible oil, cotton and some plantation crops. At the same time, the environmental stress of modern

agriculture has been felt by way of land degradation and falling water tables, adding to the difficulties of many farmers. Government of India data shows that real per capita farm incomes did not grow from 1997 to 2002, and in some states they fell.

Thus the Government policy on rural population has impacted them showing, basically, three distinct trends -

- a) Miniaturization of land holdings: Today, more than 70% of all landowners fall into the category of 'marginal farmers' owning less than one hectare of land, up from 39 % in 1960–61, while 0.52 % own more than 10 hectares, down from 5 % in 1960–61. Moreover, National Sample Survey(NSS)2003-04 data analysis reveals that only a little over 5% of the producers own more than 3 hectares. It is the marginal and small landholding categories which are getting more numerous. Their combined share of the total number of farmer households has gone up (from 75% to 91%), as well as their share of the total land area (20 % to 43 %) between the period from 1961-62 to 2003[Basole and Basu ,2009]
- b) Increasing landlessness : On the whole, 79% of rural households either do not operate any land or are of marginal farmers; the figure exceeds 90% if we include small farmers(NSS report 493). The proportion of rural landless (no access to land) among the total number rural households in India was 35.4% (87-88), increased to 38.7% (93-94) and was 40.9% (1999-2000)[Chandrasekhar and Ghosh,2004]

c) increasing number of footloose labour: Wages have become an important source of income for farmers. For farmers (11.62% of the total number of farmer households) in the size class <0.01, wages constitute 78% of their income. For another 34% of the farmers (0.01-0.40ha) 60% of their income comes from wages (NSS report 497, 2002-2003). If we include rural landless, then a staggering majority is dependent on wages on the work, basically in the unregulated informal and unorganized sector - such as construction, workshop-manufacturing, large-scale capitalist farms of other regions and services. Casualisation is the primary feature of these labour and different degrees of bonded labour relations are a common condition. There is also an important regional and caste dynamic to this massive labour migration. Adivasis, dalits and OBCs predominate in this process. Thus proletarianisation is a process of subsumption of labour by capital and also the basis of the labour segmentation that we find in capitalism.

There is also a non-farm economy which has developed within rural areas accounting for one-fifth of total employment. The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector argues that 65% of the agricultural sector is in fact self-employed (166.2 million people). There is a vast section of the Indian population that is involved in petty commodity production (PCP) where households control their means of production for exchange as well as exploit their own labour as disguised wage work. Most petty commodity producers are extremely vulnerable,

struggling to survive. Thus the rural population is increasingly being integrated into the neo-liberal expansion of Indian capitalism (casualisation, informalisation and contractualisation – as methods of organizing production), while emerging as a vast reservoir of surplus population to subsist displacement, land acquisition, agrarian crisis and underemployment. (alternating between wage employment and subsistence self-employment.)

But then, how was growth taking place in Indian economy? It is the non-agricultural growth that is being sustained across more than two decades of neo-liberal economic reforms based on sectors catering to the urban middle classes and export markets, while direct economic links between agriculture and the rest of the economy have been weakening for a long time. Agriculture has declined in importance for the non-agricultural economy and non-agricultural capitalist classes: capital for investment in industrial production is now available from non-agricultural sources, including international financial capital. Moreover, cheap food and agricultural raw materials can now be provided, at least partly, by the world market, as opposed to solely through productivity gains within India's own agriculture (Chandrasekhar 1997; Chand et al. 2007)

The extremely distorted structure of India's economy is manifested in the form of

a) bulk of the workforce is crammed into sectors with very low income, allowing islands to flourish in a sea of backwardness and poverty;

b) The speculative capital has already transmitted both shocks and stagnation;

c) foreign inflows, now subdued, fueled a consumerist surge concentrated among the better off, fenced off from the requirements of the rest of the economy;

d) the pattern of resource capture progresses (both directly in the form of inviting investment in extractive industries, and indirectly by permitting industrial projects based on captive mines), shall result in large scale destitution of the already depressed section, mostly being the tribals;

e) the flourishing industries—healthcare, real estate, retail and such others practices economic exclusion of the working people as an essential part of their growth;

f) array of subsidies provided to the corporate sector;

g) as a natural outcome of this pattern of growth, extreme inequalities have developed;

h) a necessary consequence of integration with global financial market results in the subordination of the productive economy of the vast majority to the financial-speculative capital.

Trade and exchange rate liberalization has been central to the structural adjustment programmes implemented by India since the early 1990s. After dismantling Quantitative Restrictions on importing capital goods and intermediates in 1992 and removing

custom duties on the manufacturing industries, the introduction of the new tariff reduction in 2007 have made India one of the low protection and open industrial economies (Pursell et al 2007). India's trade to GDP ratio, a measure of trade openness, increased from 20% in 1993 to 45% in 2007 (World Development Indicators). The Ratio of foreign assets and liabilities to GDP, a measure of financial integration with the global economy, increased from 43% in 1993-94 to 85% in 2007-08 (Lane and Milesi-Ferretti, 2007). The crisis of 2008-10 highlighted the vulnerability that the dynamism of globalization has engendered: growth declined in and capital fled from India to a lesser extent. The current sovereign debt crisis in the European Union could affect India adversely as the exposure of its banks to India is at about 15% of our GDP.

Now the situation is leading towards a debacle and even the World Bank says (18.1.12) that the growth is unlikely because of the moderation in demand, a deceleration in investment and heightened uncertainty in the wake of the global economic prospects. Our neo-liberal Government instead of initiating policy measures for more public investment and tighter regulations is going for "second generation reforms" - environmental deregulation, public sector divestment, more doles to corporates, while limiting the fiscal deficit. "Your problems are a national problem, they will be given priority", the Prime Minister told the 17-member delegation of corporate leaders on 18.1.2012, who are keen on a higher selling price for the power (from coal and gas) - they generate and account

for one-eighth of the country's total electricity generation capacity.

Another fascinating obsession of our ruling class is towards democracy (with the form rather than the substance). Democracy and Free Market have fused together in such a way that its strategies for accumulation of surplus are uneven according to the socio-economic terrain of the society. While it is overtly predatory in resource-rich tribal areas (piggy-backing on the legal status of the state power), it comes with a democratic mask (representative in nature and limited to election) in other areas, which is variously stratified. It perpetuates itself by creating a miniscule proportion of people of various sections as "associates or comprador" (broadly, the middle class) by allowing them to get few crumbs of power and pelf. It is many-layered, exists on the people's popular consent, and it also manufactures the consent to cement its legitimacy through a cleverly layered mathematics of electoral democracy. In the last general elections (2008), the UPA secured a comfortable majority in the parliament just by polling 10.3% of the country's population, and the parties spending, some say, nearly Rs.1000 crore. During last two decades, soon after the onset of neo-liberal policies, the election has become so pervasive and penetrative that it affects all walks of our life. Parallel institutions, regulatory bodies have been set up through a changed process of 'governance'. 'Too much representation' and 'too many' regulatory and commissions give a diminishing return to the people. Thus, "A democracy is a place", very rightly remarked by Gore Vidal, the American author, "where numerous elections are held

at great cost without issues". After all, our democratic institutions have long been patterned on the Westminster model, although both Gandhi (Hind Swaraj - Self rule) and Ambedkar (Deweyan idea of democracy as "associated life") were opposed to the parliamentary democracy. Therefore, after the neo-liberal onslaught, it was easier for them to hollow it out. In a sense, the democracy practiced in India has no role for collective praxis. The withdrawal of collective praxis is a characteristic feature of "bourgeois democracy", which, while upholding and defending the rights of individuals, "individualizes" all collectivities (also with the nature of its welfare/social security programmes), and thereby, disempowers people. While formally upholding democracy, it is reduced to a routinised affair involving empirical atomized individuals whose political choice is increasingly between parties that differ little from one another in their programmes. Worst of all, the dominance of the market permeates the political system to such an extent that the economic policies remain the same irrespective of changes in the government. Markets favour "technocratic leaders" and they lead from the rear without the political pulls and pushes. No wonder, the European leaders recently made the choice of the financial market over the requirements of political democracy (Greece and Italy). Not very long ago, Manmohan Singh (during his years in opposition) admitted to Thomas L. Friedman, who met him in 1998. "We have a world where fates are linked... it reduces our degree of freedom, even in fiscal policies. I have a friend from a neighboring country who also became a finance minister. The day he got his job I called him

to congratulate him. He said “Don’t congratulate me; I am only the half minister. The other half is in Washington”. (Lexus and the Olive tree, page 108).

However, when it fails to manufacture consent, it takes recourse to coercion. It has everything in its arsenal to “subvert, suppress, represent, misrepresent, discredit, interpret, intimidate, purchase” with money, violence, torture, imprisonment, killing, blackmail and rigged elections to subdue the “will of the people”. And then, it practices “Paramilitary Democracy”(AFSPA,65; Disturbed Areas Act,67; National Security Act,80; Unlawful Activities(Prevention) Act,2004; JK Public Security Act,78; Gujarat Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act,85; Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act,99; Chhattisgarh Public Security Act,2004, etc). It is implemented, besides regular police forces, with the help of a host of paramilitary forces—NSG, SPG, ATS, Assam Rifles, Rashtriya Rifles, CRPF, etc. consisting of about 1.3 million personnel. These forces in due course of time have fashioned themselves as establishment, who in turn make certain situations/activities on their own to create public consent for their existence. (The Army’s vested interest in not agreeing to withdraw AFSPA from some districts of JK as proposed by the Government)

However, it is also a fact that the neo-liberal regime tries to rule more through “consent” of the people than through “coercive” measures because they are difficult and unremunerative for the capital to accumulate on a sustained basis

As the disparity and dispossession grows, the people protest and resist spontaneously, very often with no well-defined objectives, no formal membership and no organic leadership, but they express deep resentment over the outcomes of the capitalist dynamic. This has been acknowledged by the International Institute of Labour Studies (ILO) in its recent annual report (2011) saying that in 40% of the 119 countries surveyed the risk of social unrest has grown considerably since 2010. There are limitations of these protests. The opposition is not against capitalism as a system but against its outcomes. That’s why some of them even go to the extent of suggesting ‘ethical capitalism’. There is no theoretical questioning of capitalism as a system based on private property and individualized decision making. Resistance is focused invariably on single issue, concerned with limited affected people, fragmentary in nature, lack of own resources, a coherent alternate political understanding and unified democratic co-ordination. Moreover, the resistance is finding it difficult to sustain long as most projects (proposed or implemented) are primarily private and increasing use of money and muscle power (by both state and private) are increasingly used to divide and subdue the opposition.

There was a time when capitalism was challenged by the working class movements with a serious political construct. But it was substantially weakened. The productive sector that assembled a collective of workers had shrunk (finance capital is mobile across national borders as well as fragmentary and outsourcing way of production process) and insecure employment and large unemployment had reduced

the proportion of organized and unionized workers in the labour force.

Likewise, the rural working class (and caste) distressed and dispossessed by the agrarian crisis due to the machinations of the neo-liberal state and a distant market are so fragmented with conflicting views and demands that hardly allows easy collective mobilization, since even the cause of the distress itself remains opaque for the most. However, it is not impossible. Although, seemingly difficult. As against this the situation in resource rich tribal areas presents a contrasting picture. Why?

1. The onslaught of the capital is the most severe in that area, therefore, we are witnessing an increasing incidences of popular conflict and resistance. Diversion of forest land for projects sharply increased after 2000 (the total diversion between 2001-06 equaled that between 1980-2001; the annual average number of forest clearance for mining was 19 between 1980-98, but increased to 216 between 1998-2005, almost 11 times.) In policy terms – in 1997, FDI in many mining sectors was opened for 50% stake which was increased to 74% in 2000. Regulations on captive coal mine by private companies were liberalized from 1998. The mining sector, forming about 4% of GDP is growing at the rate of 14%(CSO data,2010). The accumulation is closely linked to “rentier accumulation” - the capture and holding of particular means of production through accumulation by dispossession and the extraction of rent (speculative) on that basis has been the most significant

mode of accumulation.(
Gopalkrishnan,2011)

2. Since accumulation in the resource rich area is targeted at a particular geographical area, relations between those affected are submerged and the principal contradiction emerges between the external attacker and the internal resistance and in the process the legitimacy of the bourgeois democratic state is broken. Thus it offers a space to break the hegemonic hold of the neo-liberal regime.
3. The normal constraints of capitalist laws (security of private property) do not exist in the tribal areas. The basis lies with the fact that the imperial need for cheap resource extraction drove them to establish a centralized control regimes built around “scientific forestry”- which necessitated the introduction of a bounded space, legally converting that to state property. Close relation with the formal state machinery is a precondition for accumulation in the tribal (forest) areas. As a result, the link between capital, the state and the use of force is blatantly obvious in a manner that is not found elsewhere.
4. It is precisely because the people could see the enemy in its most human form, while in other areas the enemy is stratified and illusive.
5. The contradiction is sharp in this area between extractive/state driven accumulation and existing system of production - variously called communitarian
6. The liberatory potential of resource struggles is apparent

in the fact that collective production, collective institutions and collective resource control become politically possible in a very immediate and accessible manner. In such action the idea cannot be to counter-pose collective production against individual-private production, since the struggle arises from an attack on both. It would certainly be hegemonic on the part of the political resistance in its struggle against the capital.

7. The constitutional provisions related to tribals (incorporated, even though half-heartedly, both by the British and the independent India due to widespread revolt and resistance raised by tribals) - Art 19(5);5th and 6th schedule; Art.275(1); PESA,FRA and various Government policy proclamations (rescheduling of Schedule Areas, Excise policy, 74th Amendment (extension to Schedule Areas, yet to be enacted), MFP, etc are so powerful as to be antithetical to the very basic tenets of neo-liberal policies. Many struggling groups are not aware of the full import of such provisions, even very few use certain aspects of the provisions selectively in their struggle-programmes. But it would effect a real fire power when used in an integrated manner. Because the ruling class of India has purposefully, since independence, failed in its constitutional duty to the people of that area, which in Dr. B.D. Sharma’s words is a, “Unbroken Chain of broken Promises”. And we can build up the countervailing force against the capital precisely on that basis.

8. We should not forget the fact that historical outcomes do not coincide with revolutionary desire but are determined by possibilities inherent in and limited by the larger prevailing structures. Only the possible happens and the impossible does not. The viable strategy could be – “Imagine the impossible, remain true to your dream, but act on that portion of the impossible that is possible at this stage”.

Last but not the least, a large libertarian political struggle needs a core strength so as to play a force to influence, initiate and associate other struggles in other areas as it is a hard fact that no single group or a party can be able to counter the menacing domination of capitalism at this stage. The fight against the relentless onslaught of the capital can only be maneuvered by fighting for more democracy at all levels (unmasking the democratic façade of the capital) in an orderly manner (to avoid being chaotic) as well as putting up small little practical alternatives. It has to be wider in scale and inclusive of various classes and sections of population.

In this sense, some of us with the forceful persuasion of Dr. B.D.sharma have met and deliberated on the above strategy twice at the national level. We intend that more organizations should join to make it more broad-based with a focused plan for action. It has been decided by the initiating groups to hold a two-day deliberation on March 17th and 18th in a place in Nagpur. According to our practice, the expenses shall have to be borne by the groups and participants.

(Bijay Bhai <muktimep@gmail.com) - Adivasi Mukti Sanghathan

About Heddurshetti on Dr. Lohia

It was quite amusing to read the rejoinder vehemently penned by our socialist, Bapu Heddurshetti, condemning both, Dr. Lohia and me, calling me as his “blind follower”! Indeed, I am proud to say from my housetop that I am a great admirer of the late great socialist soul and I have tried to follow him in my personal life as well as in my profession. I found none other to follow!

Even as on today, Dr. Lohia is very much relevant in every aspect in the political, economic and social affairs, and there was hardly any difference between the socialist philosophies propounded by our esteemed JP and Dr. Lohia. Former had Total Revolution dear to his heart while the latter had specifically spelled it out as Saptkranti i.e. Seven Revolutions! What was the difference between the two? One was abstract while the other was concrete. Dr. Lohia had regarded JP as “more than his elder brother” while JP had become deeply emotional in referring to “Rammanohar”, when I had heard him during the Emergency. All those Socialists had, inter se, personal love and affection for each other. Public pinch or punch had no malice against each other which, we, their followers did not and do not realize and created paper-walls between them!

Dr. Lohia had professed the cause of the poor and removal of inequality and had preached what he himself practiced in his personal life. He quietly got himself admitted in a public hospital where a common poor man goes for treatment. He had identified himself with the poorest man of our country. Otherwise what prevented him from going to any five star hospital a day before he left for Delhi! He had professed reservation for backward classes and women. Even Com. S. A.

Dange, a learned politician- a class by himself- had said that the caste system in India needed an entirely different approach and treatment than the Marxian class struggle to achieve the goal of equality in India. This was explained eloquently and intelligently by Dr. Lohia in his treatise Marx, Gandhi and Socialism/ Economics after Marx. Has any thing changed thereafter to call Dr. Lohia irrelevant? He is very much relevant even without his “prefix”! He had roared in the Parliament in 1963 that poverty was stalking the country and that the income of 27 crores people was less than 3 annas a day. At that time he was ridiculed though he had justified his accurate conclusion and analysis supported by facts and figures from the state’s documents. Today, even our PM has accepted the starvation as national shame while TOI (17.1.2012) carries a headline “Superpower? 230 million Indians go hungry daily”. It has aptly depicted this situation even after 65 years of freedom as “simmering injustices”. The Commission on Unorganized Sector appointed by the Government of India has recorded its findings that about 136 millions i. e., 87 percent of India’s population lives on Rs. 20 or less per person per day. It has further recorded that around 27 crores in India go to bed hungry every night! Those who had ridiculed Dr. Lohia in 1963 are speaking his language today. In these circumstances he had preached austerity in the life of the rulers and high ranking bureaucrats to save public money to be invested in industries to create jobs for those who need bread. His economics stands to triumph even today. He had dreamt of at least approximate equality in our society.

A controversy had arisen in respect of superiority between the Parliament and the Supreme Court.

Our young and charismatic leader late Nath Pai had professed a view that the Parliament was superior to the Supreme Court. Dr. Lohia held a view that neither of them was superior. According to him the Constitution of India was Supreme as both, the Parliament and the Supreme Court were creatures of the Constitution. Not only during emergency did we realize the danger of calling the Parliament Supreme but later even the Supreme Court has held that the Constitution of India was Supreme and that the Parliament could not amend its “basic features”. Dr. Lohia and Madhu Limaye were vindicated.

If Dr. Lohia was not conferred the degree of doctorate, he alone could have answered that question but none dared to ask him that question in his life time. Posthumous berating a dead person is wholly wrong and unjust as the dead person is not present to defend himself. By no stretch of imagination raking up of such mean and personal question after the death of the person can be termed as “analysis” of principles and philosophy of the dead person. Of course his principles would always be subject to critical appreciation at intellectual levels. Shri Heddurshetti has also put many other questions which Dr. Lohia alone could answer in respect of his personal relation with his other comrades but Shri Heddurshetti did not think it proper to do so at the right time. Nowhere he has critically analysed Dr. Lohia’s principles and philosophy including his essay on Marx and Gandhi. Such exercise requires intellectual caliber and ability.

Now for the information of all those Lohia hater Socialists let us read the following very authentic writing on the wall of the website

of Humboldt University (Universitat Zu Berlin)

“Lohia received his academic education in Bombay, Benares and Calcutta. He went to Germany for higher studies. Hitler was in power at that time. Lohia wrote his doctoral thesis in the field of economics. In Berlin University (the later Humboldt- University); his subject was the Salt Satyagraha in India. He was awarded the Doctorate in both Economics and Political Science. He worked under the supervision of eminent historical economist Prof. Werner Sombart.

“In his Berlin years (1929-1932) Lohia was very active among the Indian Students in various universities of Germany and other countries of Europe. He was also an engaged student in the German affairs in those critical years of the German history. He returned to India in 1932 and soon became totally involved in the national movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi for freedom from the British rule. He was also one of the founders of the socialist movement in India. After independence Lohia became the voice of millions of peasants and workers and led several movements for building a socialist society.”

Now at least be kind and truthful to the departed socialist soul and bury the mean sense of hatred against him!

In his reply to my article (Janata, October 30, 2011) Shri Heddurshetti (Janata, November 20, 2011) had quoted Yogendra Yadav partly. This is not fair at all and this fact also reflects biased mind of Shri Heddurshetti. Shri Yadav had written in his article (Janata October 17, 2010) :

“The small and dwindling band of Lohia’s blind admirers who are still dazzled to see anything beyond ‘doctor sahib’ and the equally blind critics who are too prejudiced and

self assured to even read what Lohia had to say about some of the big questions of our time.”

(Emphasis is given by me to show what was deliberately deleted by

Shri Heddurshetti because, perhaps it applies to him!) Why stoop to such a mean level to condemn a dead person?

– R. J. Kochar

Farmers demonstration at Vidhan Sabha

Kisan Sangharsh Samiti organized a demonstration at Madhya Pradesh Vidhan Sabha demanding cancellation of Adani Pench Power Project, Pench Diversion Project, S.K.S Project, MAXCO Project in Chindwada district and handing over of land back to the 50 thousand farmers of 50 villages.

Thousands of farmers assembled on 23rd February morning at Sahjani Park and marched towards assembly. They were stopped at Neelam park by police, where they staged dharna till sunset. NAPM National Coordinator Madhuresh Kumar gave vivid account of the violation of environment loss and loot of Natural Resources done by Adani’s in Mundra, Gujrat. He said that without getting clearance from Ministry of Environment and Forest in Chindwada. Adani’s started doing similar crime which must be stopped by people. He extended solidarity of 250 peoples’ movements to Kisan Sangharsh Samiti struggle.

Mansaram, leader of Narmada Bachao Aandolan said that people’s power was the supreme power in the democracy but government are not ready to honor peoples power. He gave detailed account of NBA struggle and achievements.

Addressing the farmers the Working President of KSS, Dr. Sunilam demanded that government of Madhya Pradesh take the position that no agricultural land will be acquired and no land acquisition will be done without consent of Gram Sabha. He demanded that

government should bring this resolution and get it passed in Vidhan Sabha for inclusion in the proposed land acquisition bill to be passed in the Budget Session of Parliament.

Dr. Sunilam said that the government will not be allowed to become agent of business houses while taking votes on the name of welfare of common peoples. Dr. Sunilam said that Supreme Court has directed all the state governments to clear the encroachments of the graveyards and grazing lands, but government of Madhya Pradesh has allowed not only encroachments of graveyards and grazing lands but also allowed Adani’s to encroach the public village roads and 20 hectares of “Chote jhad ka jungle”. In Katni, grazing land is given away to Sukhsagar Builders. Similarly land acquired on the name of irrigation in the Pench Diversion Project is being used for providing water to Adani’s, which is totally illegal.

Advt. Aradhna Bhargav, Vice President of KSS and leader of Project affected farmers of Chindwada said that the government had acquired land of farmers for building canals at the cost of 15000 rupees per acre, subsequently destroying the adjoining farm lands and now the same water is sold out to Adani’s illegally. She demanded that land acquired by the government the Adani Pench Power Project, Pench Diversion Project, S.K.S Project, MAXCO Project must be given back to the farmers after cancellation of

the projects. She said that we do not want to get in to severe conflict with government but farmers are being compelled to stop construction work of canals by doing Satyagrah at construction site, because concerned officials are not ready to talk to the farmers. She threatened the government to take the issue to streets of Delhi by organizing demonstration at Parliament House on the 22nd – 23rd March.

Dr.A.K Khan, Vice resident of KSS said that villagers of Padua

village are fighting for long time to save the village land which is being allotted to Sukhsagar Pvt. Ltd. He said that farmers are ready to sacrifices there mother land and go to any extent for the same. He demanded state government to save the public lands, which is necessary not only for farmers but also for survival of cattle.

Ghudo Patel District President, Rama Patel Vice President, Kunj Bihari Patel Gen. Secretary, Kamal Singh Treasurer Rakesh Verma

Secretary, Mekhlal Asst. Secretary, Block President of Chindwada Sajje Chandrvansi, Devi Chandrvansi Vice President, Mahesh Daheria Treasurer, Balram Chandrvansi, Kisnu, Kunjvihar Sharma Gen. Secretary, Chinga Verma Choria Block President, Sukhlal verma, Vice President, Balram Verma Gen. Secretary, Jitu Masram Secretary led the demonstration.

KSS also gave memorandum to Chief Minister, Irrigation Minister, Revenue Minister.

– Deepak Pauranik

Mumbai High Court Indicts Hiranandani Developers

“It is a victory of the struggles of the working classes of Mumbai who live in slums, bastis and chawls, face eviction and are constantly termed as 'encroachers'. The interim judgement of Mumbai High Court today vindicates our stand and once again proves the criminal nexus between builders, politicians and bureaucracy. We welcome the directions of the Honourable Court and hope the land will be returned to the original owners or used for the urban poor. It is ironical that the Government of Maharashtra was kind enough to give 300 Acres of land to Hiranandani at the rate of 40 paisa per acre but has continued to evict and break the homes of basti dwellers in Mandala, Sathe Nagar, Golibar, Kannamwar Nagar and others,” said Medha Patkar.

She was reacting to the interim judgement in a PIL filed by her against Niranjan Hiranandani for irregularities and fraud in development of Hiranandani Gardens, township in Powai. Mumbai High Court bench presided by Chief Justice Mohit C Shah and Smt Roshan Dalvi ordered immediate halting of all construction and directed the developers not to sell any flats without the Court order. The case was argued by

Advocate Ashish Mehta on behalf of the petitioner, Medha Patkar of Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan – National Alliance of People's Movements. In earlier years the case was argued by senior advocate Y P Singh.

Court accepted criminal intent and illegality in land allotment to the Hiranandani Developers and building of the Hiranandani Gardens it said the petitioners are free to initiate criminal proceedings against the Developers, State Government and other Statutory authorities.

It ordered the developers to construct 3,000 flats (1500 flats of 400 Square feet and 1500 of 800 square feet) to be handed over to the State Government, which will allot it to the Lower Income Group and Middle Income Group people at the rate of 135 Rs / square feet, the rate prevalent in 1985. The land in question was, actually given on lease to Hiranandani for building houses for poor people but in gross violation of all terms and conditions it built sky scrapers, housing societies, Malls etc for rich and big businesses.

While posting the case for final hearing on March 29th 2012 Court directed MMRDA, Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai,

State Government, Developers and Petitioners to jointly prepare diagrams showing the extent to which the FSI and TDR has been used and how much remains to be used. Court accepted the contention that huge losses has been incurred by the government due to violations by the Hiranandani developers but didn't pass any judgement on that since there is a separate arbitration case ongoing in Mumbai High between the State and Developers.

Members of Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan expressed their satisfaction at the progress and said they will wait for the final judgement in March 2012. Millions of working class people have a right to decent housing and it is time state government started evicting the big builders who have encroached upon the public and other land meant for housing of urban poor. Let government use the land above ceiling available in Mumbai for implementing of the right to housing. Let them implement Rajiv Awas Yojana. Our struggle against the Builders will continue and we will continue to expose their corruption.

Sumit Wajale, Prerna Gaekwad, Santosh Thorat, Madhuri Shivkar, Madhuri Variyath



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 67 No. 6
March 4, 2012

Neither forgive nor forget

S.Viswam

Are our elections free and fair?

Kuldip Nayar

**A Sugar-coated Pill
to Save Greece**

Nitish Chakravarty

**India-EU FTA: Where is
the Europe's Trade
Agenda Headed ?**

Kavaljit Singh

**An Open Letter to the
Fellow Citizens of India**

Jaitapur no thank you!

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : **Guddi**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

The tenth anniversary of the ill-famed Gujarat carnage in which Muslims in Gujarat were targeted by frenetic and savage Hindu mobs fell on Monday, February 27. The day was observed with due solemnity by certain sections of the state's population who still grieve for the massacred souls, but the Vishwa Hindu Parishad virtually converted the day into one of anti-terrorist commitment, thus painting the Muslims who set fire to some coaches of the Sabarmati Express on that day at Godhra as international terrorists. However, regardless of the nature of the observance of the day, the fact remains that the victims of the carnage have yet to get justice. Many of those who were rendered homeless on that day, not only in Ahmedabad but other parts of Gujarat are still languishing in refugee camps while many of the cases filed against the alleged participants and instigators of the carnage are dragging on in courts.

But what is most regrettable is that leave alone strive for justice for the victims, even the educated and the elite in Gujarat and other parts of the country are thinking and speaking aloud about "forgiving and forgetting" the gory incidents on that day of national shame since

ten years have passed and "it is necessary that Gujarat and India move forward and not keep harping on the carnage". Chief Minister Narendra Modi, without whose blessing and connivance members of the majority community would not have dared to take the law into their hands, is being commended in certain circles as the man who deserves to be forgiven since he has introduced a revolutionary and forward-looking development culture in Gujarat. Narendra Modi himself has yet to express a single word of remorse or regret. On the other hand, he maintains an air of detachment whenever Godhra figures in the public debate as if what is being spoken or condemned relates to some other state in some other country. To no one's surprise he is even being recommended as the Bharatiya Janata Party's prime ministerial candidate in the 2014 Lok Sabha poll! Modi has more supporters within the BJP today than even Atal Behari Vajpayee! Modi was the person in authority who ordered the police not to interfere as Hindus were on a rampage, burning Muslims' houses, destroying their property, molesting and raping Muslim women and indulging in a genocidal spree. Yet, he seems to be beyond the reach of law,

while his party and his supporters project him as the next Messiah of the Hindus and the saviour of India.

Between the lines

Are our elections free and fair?

Kuldip Nayar

Only ten years, and India is tending to forget the Gujarat Carnage. Worse, it is even ready to forgive those who killed and raped and looted and burnt. The prevailing sentiment seems to be that remembering the carnage and demanding justice for the victims is no more in “sync” with the image of India a superpower in the making. The advocates of the “forget and forgive” campaign forget that just on the outskirts of the flourishing Ahmedabad city are located many of the rehabilitation camps where thousands of the carnage victims are living in abject penury.

But why should you and me be surprised? How many of us remember Gandhiji today, and how many of us shed tears for him or commit ourselves to his ideals? After his assassination, his birthday and his martyrdom day used to be celebrated and observed respectively with some evidence of sincerity. But today, who bothers about Gandhi? Who bothers for that matter for the thousands and thousands of satyagrahis, of the victims of the Dwyer’s shooting of innocent civilians in Jallianwala Bagh off Amritsar? Gandhi Jayanti is a public holiday in India, but on that day India does everything that was repugnant to the Mahatma.

But India can afford to forget and forgive the Gujarat carnage only at the risk of losing its very ethos and his history. The Gujarat carnage was a blot on India’s conscience. It represented the very anti-thesis of everything a democratic liberal secular India stands for. Already, much to the shock of large sections

Elections in India have lost the carnival spirit because no processions, no buntings, no bands and no posters are allowed by the Election Commission. But this has not decreased the expenses. UP, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa which went to polls have totaled the highest amount ever spent in state elections. The rough guess is around Rs 2,000 crore. Proportionately, Punjab was at the top of the ladder.

The Election Commission can do little because the money is distributed at unknown places, generally in the hush of night. No Lokpal can detect this because the purchase of vote is at the individual level. And each constituency has hundreds of hands employed by political parties in the name of bandobast. They have to search their heart if the illegal money which they spend bothers them in any way. But then they are driven by the mania of power.

In our times, a volunteer would sling a thaila (bag), carry grams for sustenance and go on foot. This was canvassing at the grassroots. Today even a party worker would ask for a jeep for travel and expect four meals, starting from breakfast. The communists and the RSS pracharaks are the only ones who remain motivated. But even among them that type of dedication is lessening.

The Election Commission has confiscated nearly Rs 50 crore

and some trucks carrying liquor. Instances of “paid news” have also been spotted for action. But all this does not amount to even one per cent of money the candidates and political parties have spent. Yet the credit of making the polling without violence goes to the Election Commission or, for that matter, Chief Election Commissioner S.Y. Qureshi. He stretched the polling over six weeks so that the central security forces were available in all the five states. It is a sad reflection on the state police but the force is so much at the beck and call of chief minister that no fair election is possible if it is left to the state. Even local police used to help and acted independently till the mid-seventies when morality was ousted from politics.

One thing which stands out in elections is the enforcement of model conduct code, agreed upon by all political parties some 20 years ago. The ruling Congress is the only party to join issue with the Commission on this point and has threatened to make the code statutory so that the violation is dragged to law courts instead of the Election Commission where the action is immediate and the complaint is attended to forthwith.

The government’s thinking is understandable because the Congress has been the biggest sinner. Starting from Law Minister Salman Khurshid to the crown prince, Rahul Gandhi, the party has paid scant attention to model conduct code. It

(Continued on Page 3)

has even played the religious card by announcing that the party, if returned to power, would allocate 9 per cent of reservation to Muslims in education and employment from the overall 27 per cent reservation for the backward classes. (According to the Sachar Committee report the plight of Muslims in India is worse than that of Dalits and that the 80 per cent Muslims are backward).

When the Election Commission took the Law Minister to task for announcing a sub-quota during electioneering, he first hummed and hawed but subsequently sent a written apology. The matter would have ended then and there if another central minister Beni Prasad had not repeated the sub-quota for Muslims. He has even challenged the Election Commission in a law court. Nobody objects to reservations for the backward Muslims. The objection is to the reservation on religious grounds - the point which the Constitution of India prohibits.

Rahul Gandhi has been batting on a different pitch. He has been indulging in such antics which do not befit a person who may be India's prime minister. He tears the manifesto of an opposition party and makes remarks which even street urchins would hesitate to do. A case has been registered against him at Kanpur where he had a road show violating the understanding on the timing and the route he gave. Had he apologized, the issue would have been sorted out. But he has persisted with it.

In fact, UP saw the entire Gandhi family, including the husband of Priyanka, Sonia Gandhi's daughter. The dynasty somehow has come to believe that it alone strings India together and all political parties

are petty and parochial except the Congress. Therefore, the dynasty gathered in UP to pull out the party from a quagmire of non-existence it had been stuck for years. Regrettably, the party should introduce religion as an appeal which the dynasty's head, Jawaharlal Nehru, denounced throughout his life. Muslims constitute about 19 per cent of the electorate and the Congress has jettisoned its secular credentials to placate them.

The BJP is expected to communalize the atmosphere but it is no use blaming it when the Congress throws the first stone. The BJP did not have to get chief minister Narendra Modi of Gujarat pogrom to UP because Uma Bharti had poured enough venom against Muslims. That a party which considers itself an alternative at the centre should have the building of temple at the site where the Babri masjid stood once indicates the policies the BJP would follow if it is ever returned to power.

Unfortunately, the use of caste or, more so, the sub-caste has increased in every segment of activity even in urban areas. This malady has spread even among Muslims who are prohibited from putting their faith in the caste system. In fact, many Hindus had embraced Islam to escape the tyranny of discrimination. But they find the Muslim society as hierarchal as the Hindus'.

Elections have been free and fair and the Election Commission deserves all the kudos. But when money, caste and religion come into play and make a mockery of polls, can they be called free and fair? This is one question which all political parties have to answer, not the Election Commission which

has been awaiting for months the government's permission not to allow such candidates who have been charged with big crime like murders, rapes or dacoities.

(Continued from Page 2)

of the population, we have forgotten the assault against our cherished ideal of secularism in the form of the wanton destruction of the Babri Masjid. The Gujarat carnage will also fade from our collective memories if we get into the forgive and forget mode. If that happens none of us would be entitled to call ourselves Indians, leave alone tolerant, liberal and secular Indians committed to a multi-polarist society and culture. We will lose more than our Indianness. We will lose ourselves and our dignity and our right to live decently in a decent society in a decent country. We need to remember whatever happened in Gujarat ten years ago, and focus on it year after year still the victims of the carnage get justice. We must hope and pray that that day will be nearer rather than distant.

Madhu Dandavate

By

B. Vivekanandan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007.

A Sugar-coated Pill to Save Greece

Nitish Chakravarty

Even though not as prosperous as the well-heeled nations of northern Europe, the Hellenic Republic - commonly known as Greece - is neither poor nor undeveloped. The gross domestic product of this nation of 11.5 million people [less than one per cent of India's 1200 million] in 2010 was, according to World Bank statistics, 314,721 million international dollars or as much as 7.5 per cent of India's GDP of 4,194,856 million dollars. Yet Greece's economy, buffeted by the economic tsunami that has battered the world since the late 2000s, is in the throes of a severe financial crisis. The turmoil in Greece may not ordinarily be of much concern to us in India. But Greece being a member of the European Community - or the Common Market - and its currency being the euro, it cannot be treated in isolation, for whatever happens there has a ripple effect across the Continent. If Greece sneezes, the European Union catches a cold. And the European Union is one of India's leading trading partners.

This nursery of western civilization is crippled by a heavy debt burden, and faces the risk of defaulting on its sovereign debt liability [in other words, failing to honour repayment obligations to its lenders] and possible expulsion from the Common Market. What has brought Greece to such a pass is a long story. One of the triggers for the crisis is widespread evasion of income and other taxes by wealthy Greeks and others doing business in the country. In consequence massive deficits have rocked the country year

after fiscal year. Profligate spending from the public exchequer without regard for consequences has fuelled the crisis. Loss of confidence in the nation's banks has driven depositors to pull out some 40 billion euros over the last couple of years. No wonder financiers have tightened their fists narrowing Greece's ability to borrow. In the event the economy has slipped into a tailspin.

The financial crisis has in turn spawned a political crisis. Greece and its foreign lenders are locked in a dangerous brinkmanship over the future of the nation and the euro. At the diktat of the troika of its lenders - the leading Eurozone countries, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund - Greece has had to change its government. Prime Minister George Papandreou quit making room for Lucas Papademos, an economist who for many years was a high official at the European Central Bank. Papademos was chosen as the interim head of government not just because he is perceived to be a financial whizz-kid capable of salvaging Greece from the breaking point but also because he is more amenable to the harsh terms and conditions imposed by the troika as the price for pulling Greece out of the logjam. Following the change of government the ECB-IMF combine stepped up the demand for more concessions to placate Germany and other northern European countries where the bailout of Greece is hard to sell to voters. The troika insisted that Greece's guarantees of honouring its debt repayment obligations

have to be signed not only by the government in office now but also by leaders of all political parties so that a future government cannot renege.

The austerity measures forced on Greece from February 2010 onwards include a 22 per cent cut in the benchmark minimum wage of 750 euros per month for public and private sector workers alike and laying off 150,000 government employees by 2015 - a bitter prospect in a country ravaged by five years of recession and with unemployment numbers swirling around 21 per cent and still rising. The austerity prescription also includes cancellation of holiday bonuses permanently, pension cuts to the tune of 300 million euros in 2012, relaxation of laws to enable employers to lay off workers at will, cuts in the allocation of government funds for health care and defence, and privatisation of public utilities such as gas companies to the tune of 15 billion euros by 2015. The working population of Greece has taken to the streets like never before to vent their anger. Protests against the current crisis are a matter of everyday occurrence, often erupting in violence on an unprecedented scale in different parts of the country, especially in Athens, the capital. Government buildings have been torched. Mobs have raided malls and department stores emptying them of all the goodies they could lay their hands on.

The Papademos government has bent over backwards to meet the ECB-IMF conditions. The vote on the austerity measures

came after days of intense debate in the Greek Parliament and the resignation of several ministers in protest. While 199 MPs voted in favour, 74 rejected them outright and 27 others abstained. Parliament also endorsed a broader deal with the lenders, following which the Papademos government engaged in fresh negotiations with the troika. After prolonged deliberations the troika chalked out at Brussels early last week a bail package assuring Greece of loans aggregating 130 billion euros [approximately U.S. \$172 billion] on condition that Greece will reduce by 2020 its debts to 120.5 per cent of its GDP from the current level of about 160 per cent. It is not as if the IMF and leaders of the European Union have come up with the “rescue Greece” plan on altruistic considerations. The rescue package - at best a sugar-coated bitter pill - is a recognition that letting Greece collapse would set a dangerous precedent. The ripple effect of Greece defaulting on its debt obligations is bound to be felt all across Europe and is likely to hasten a crisis overtaking shaky south European economies such as Portugal, Spain and Italy, and eventually even France and Germany.

Doubts have been voiced by a cross section of knowledgeable people about Greece's ability to reduce the debt burden so drastically in the course of only eight years. Howsoever “soft” the terms of the loans now offered, Greece - or for that matter any country - can repay only when their economy grows. With such a heavy debt burden the Greeks' chances of being able to honour their obligations are not rated high. Actually questions have

(Continued on Page 10)

India-EU FTA: Where is the Europe's Trade Agenda Headed ?

Kavaljit Singh

The internal documents of the European Commission reveal the disgraceful attempts to push for higher levels of commitments in trade in industrial goods and agricultural products, services and investment liberalisation, geographical indications and government procurement under the proposed India-EU free trade agreement.

Since 2007, India and EU have been negotiating a free trade pact, officially known as Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA). Notwithstanding several rounds of negotiations, the finalisation of BTIA has been delayed as differences cropped up between India and the EU over certain issues.

Despite much anticipation, both trading partners could not finalise the agreement before the official India-EU Summit held in New Delhi on 10th February. The joint statement issued after the Summit is very ambiguous and therefore does not shed light on the progress made on several issues under negotiations. It appears that the current logjam in the negotiations is over services liberalisation under different modes on both sides besides India's reluctance to accept substantial tariff reduction on cars, wines and spirits.

The Significance of EC Documents

The EC documents, which are not publicly available, were prepared just weeks before the India-EU Summit. The documents assume greater significance as the trade

negotiations between India and EU are being held behind closed doors. Considering the fact that this legally binding BTIA would cover close to 1.7 billion people - almost 20 percent of the world population - the potential impacts and implications (both positive and negative) of the agreement could be far reaching.

The documents provide an overview of the current state of play in the India-EU trade negotiations. The EC documents are elaborated versions of the landing zones paper (released in November 2011) containing some additional detail to avoid ambiguities and “clearly establish conditionality of the EU's offer.”

While these documents may represent the European position, one cannot deny that there would be enormous pressure on the Indian authorities to accept higher levels of commitments in several sectors.

A listing of all the EU's demands is beyond the scope of this article, some of the key demands mentioned in the EC documents are described below.

Commitments on Services

The EU is seeking greater commitments on services and investment liberalisation in addition to all the elements included in the revised offer by India under the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The EC documents contend that the minimum levels of services liberalisation commitments from India are “necessary” for EU to offer commitments in mode 1 (cross-border service supply) and mode 4 (movement of natural persons) in reciprocity. India is seeking a significant relaxation for the movement of its professionals under mode 4 within the 27-bloc while the EU is seeking greater market access in banking services (mode 3 - commercial presence), insurance (mode 1 and 3) retail trade (mode 1 and 3), and telecommunications (mode 1 and 3) in India.

It is important to note that since information technology (IT) and IT enabled Services (ITeS) are of critical importance to India, the EU has deliberately linked services package to the tariff negotiations. According to the EC document, the negotiations on the services and investment texts will need to continue in parallel.

The EU expects the following commitments on services to be explicitly included in India’s schedule of commitments.

Establishment:

- India is expected to remove the limitation that exists in DDA revised offer in most sectors requiring approval for new investments where a foreign investor, with an existing joint venture or technical collaboration, could not make any new investment in a similar venture unless the existing Indian partner issued a no objection letter and the new investment was also subject to specific prior Government approval. However, this regulation has been removed

by a new consolidated Foreign Direct Investment Policy, which came into effect from April 1, 2011.

Financial services:

- EU is seeking greater market access commitments and national treatment obligations for European banks and financial services industry.
- India is expected to bind foreign ownership in the form of FDI at 74% while ensuring that 100% owned subsidiaries are not forced to divest.
- India is expected to provide to wholly owned subsidiaries of European banks incorporated in India full national treatment, including removal of any numerical ceilings on number of local branches and assurance that banking licences are only denied on purely prudential basis.
- India is expected to commit granting to European banks a number of branch licences per year which amounts to 50% of all new branch licences awarded in India in the given year, but not less than 10 licences per year. [As per India’s revised offer at WTO, the number of branch licences issued to foreign banks has been increased to 20 per year. In terms of branch licences, foreign banks have greater presence in India than in the EU].
- India is expected to clarify that the definition of branch does not include back-offices (offices that are not directly engaged in sales to clients) and ATMs, which will therefore be able to establish outside the quota.

Insurance:

- India is expected to bind the autonomous liberalisation that will enter into force when the current draft bill in the Parliament will be approved; in particular India is expected to commit allowing foreign ownership of 49% or more if the law allows more.
- India is also expected to allow branching in reinsurance.

Distribution:

- India is expected to bind the current opening, i.e. 100% foreign ownership in franchising both for mode 1 and 3.
- For multi-brand retail India is expected to bind the already decided autonomous liberalisation that will enter into force when published. The minimum commitment is allowing foreign ownership of 51%.
- For single-brand retail India is expected to commit 100% foreign ownership for European single brand retailers.
- India may enter limited specific exclusions from product coverage. However, these should not exclude from commitments sectors currently open for competition on national treatment basis. Any such exclusion is subject to further negotiations.

Legal services:

- India is expected to submit and mutually agree with EU a roadmap for gradual opening of the provision of legal services by European companies and

professionals and to commit on implementing the mentioned roadmap. This commitment would be included in the text of the Title on Trade in Services accompanied with a specific review clause for amending the specific commitments of India in 5 years time to reflect the progress made in following the roadmap.

- The roadmap is expected to broadly follow the following liberalisation path:

- Allow EU firms' representative offices and EU qualified lawyers to provide advisory services on foreign (public international law and EU law), home country and third country law (of any given EU Member State) as of entry into force of the EU-India FTA.
- Allow for the EU firms and professionals to cooperate with Indian law firms on cases that touch on both domestic and foreign legal issues and to share profits derived from such cases as of two years after the entry into force of the FTA.
- Allow the establishment of joint ventures five years after the entry into force of the FTA.
- These commitments are not expected to cover representation in domestic courts, and may exclude some categories of law from market opening, may be subject to specific qualification requirements and may include additional conditions such as

proportion of voting shares, ownership caps, etc.

Telecommunication:

- India is expected to commit ownership cap of 74% for all subsectors.
- India is expected to commit mode 1 for telecom services other than satellite (such as - Virtual Private Networks).

Postal and courier services:

- India is expected to grandfather the market currently available to EU companies already present on the Indian market, including scope of services allowed to be provided.
- India is furthermore expected to agree to a specific review clause in the text of the Title on Trade in Services committing to a review to be conducted once the current ongoing reform is concluded, during which both regulatory principles as well as specific commitments would be reviewed.

Maritime transport services:

- India is expected to include the market access commitments on maritime services in the FTA.
- India is expected to abolish or considerably reduce the cargo reservation to liner ships flying Indian flag.

Accountancy, bookkeeping and auditing services:

- India is expected to take commercial presence commitments in these sectors, specifically the auditing services. These commitments may be gradual entering into force over a period of five years as of entry

into force of the FTA and may be subject to specific qualification requirements and may include additional conditions such as proportion of voting shares, ownership caps, etc.

- India is expected to allow companies to use their internationally known brand names even if registered after 1988.

Ambitious NAMA Package

In the Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) negotiations under the framework of BTIA, the EU is seeking an ambitious outcome for its businesses through drastic cuts in applied tariff rates as well as reduction of non-tariff barriers. The NAMA products account for almost 90% of the world's merchandise exports and cover industrial goods, fuels and mining products, fish, and forestry products.

The EC documents show that the EU is not satisfied with India's initial tariff offer and therefore seeking further improvements. In particular, EU is insisting on elimination of duties on the additional 57 tariff lines (mostly related to automobile industry) as an essential component of the overall NAMA package of the agreement.

The documents also indicate that there is a vast difference between the coverage of India's original tariff offers exchanged at the beginning of the negotiations and of the potential offer (Table 1). "India would reach a level of around 95% full duty elimination in NAMA (both in terms of trade and tariff lines). EU coverage approaches 100% with a very limited number of exceptions (some chemicals and fisheries lines)," claims the EC document on

NAMA package.

Table 1: Coverage of India's NAMA Tariff Offer

Estimated Coverage (full Liberalisation in 10 years or less) FTA tariff offers	Tariff lines (in %)				Bilateral trade (in %)			
	India		EU		India		EU	
	Original offer	Potential offer	Original offer	Potential offer	Original offer	Potential offer	Original offer	Potential offer
Total NAMA	91.0	95.2	94.6	99.8	89.0	95.5	90.4	99.8
Chemicals	94.1	97.5	88.4	99.7	86.3	94.2	80.3	97.6
Textiles	91.1	100	95.5	100	76.7	100	88.5	100
Machinery	92.1	98.9	95.0	100	85.5	99.4	97.2	100

While comparing India's offer to the EU with the offer made to Japan (under India-Japan FTA), the EC document points out that the outcome for the EU is considerably better than the one achieved by Japan. "While India has completely excluded 1040 lines in their offer to Japan, only 400 would remain excluded from the offer to the EU and preferential treatment would apply to an additional 80 lines (mainly paper, passenger cars and trucks)," says the document.

Duties Reduction Could Lead to \$2.4 Billion Revenue Loss to India

Given the fact that India's WTO bound and currently applied rates on NAMA are higher than EU rates (see Table 2), the price paid by India for the tariff concessions to EU would be much higher. There is also very

low applied MFN tariff of the EU on NAMA imports from India.

The EC document acknowledges that the potential agreement would save nearly US\$2.4 billion (Rs.11000 crore) annually on custom duties on NAMA products – based on Indian imports from EU in 2008 – once it is fully implemented. The document further maintains that this amount does not include agricultural products and products subject to preferential treatment.

In other words, the potential agreement entails an annual revenue loss of Rs.11000 crore to the Indian Government on account of reduction in customs duties. The annual loss of Rs.11000 crore cannot be ignored by Indian policy makers, particularly in the present times when tax revenues

are under severe pressure.

Specific Sectors

Based on its negotiations with India, the EC document on NAMA package draws the following conclusions on specific sectors:

Textiles/Clothing:

Given India's international competitiveness in Textiles/Clothing the entire sector will be liberalised by both sides with a significant degree of frontloading (more than half of tariff lines fully liberalised after 3 years). Apart from full coverage, both trading partners have reached a high degree of reciprocity in staging.

Chemicals (and Pharmaceuticals):

India's offer to EU is far better than the one offered to Japan. Under the India-Japan FTA, as many as 482

Table 2: Comparison of WTO Bound and currently applied rates

Estimated simple average duties	India			EU			
	WTO Bound	WTO DDA	MFN applied	WTO Bound	WTO DDA	MFN applied	EU
Total NAMA	45.1	18.8	9.5	4.0	2.1	4.3	2.0
Chemicals	41.6	14.2	8.0	4.7	2.7	2.5	0.3
Textiles	62.0	40.0	10.0	8.2	3.9	8.2	7.3
Machinery	27.9	10.5	7.2	2.2	1.4	2.5	0.3

chemicals lines were excluded. In contrast, only 57 chemicals lines are to be excluded under the proposed agreement with EU; whereas India's original offer was to exclude 132 chemical lines. Despite substantial improvement in India's offer, the EU would maintain the currently applied duty on 4 sensitive chemicals lines.

Table 3: Chemicals - Original Offer

	Lines	Trade
Total	2238	1959
Exclusion	132	268
Coverage	94.1%	86.3%

Table 4: Chemicals - Potential + Request Offer

	Lines	Trade
Total	2238	1959
Exclusion	55	114
Coverage	97.5%	94.2%

- On its part, India has already offered the full elimination of all duties on pharmaceuticals.
- India would eliminate duties on chemicals in no more than 7 years (while the EU would eliminate duties over a maximum of 5 years).

Machinery:

According to the EC document, India's offer on Machinery is close to the target of full liberalisation. Coverage has already improved from 92.1% of tariff lines and 85.5% of trade to 96.9% of tariff lines and 95.7% of trade. The EU continues to press strongly for the elimination of duties on 32 additional tariff lines in chapters 84-85 (including both machinery and car parts) which would bring coverage to almost 100%, i.e. 98.9% of tariff lines and 99.4% of trade.

Passenger Cars:

India would offer preferential

access to European automotive industry while the country has not offered the similar concessions to Japan, Korea and ASEAN under its bilateral agreements.

The expected car package contains the following elements:

- India should reduce its tariff on imports of passenger cars from the EU to 30% at entry into force for cars > 1.5 litres and for cars < 1.5 litres to 30 % no later than 2017/2018.
- In addition, India should open at entry into force a tariff quota of at least 40000 units with a yearly growth rate of 5000. No later than 2017/18, the in-quota duty rate must not be higher than 10%. The quota should be allocated to exports of cars less than 1.5 litres until the out-of-quota rate is 30% for all car categories.
- A review clause should establish the objective of full duty elimination and propose a mechanism to work towards this goal.
- India will present, no later than 1 January 2017, an offer for further substantial reduction of duties on all types of passenger cars. The EU expects such offer to include a schedule for bringing Indian import duties progressively to zero over a reasonable period of time.
- Provided India delivers the elements set out above, the EU should reduce duties on cars to 3% at entry into force and to zero no later than 2017/18.

Apart from above mentioned sectors, EU is also pushing for

substantial improvements in India's offer on paper, trucks and fisheries.

Wines and spirits:

According to the EC internal document, India has offered to bring tariffs on wines and spirits to 75% at entry into force and reduce to 40% in 3 years (wine) and 4 years (spirits). However, this offer is not acceptable to the EU. It is seeking substantial reduction in both cut-off points and end duty levels. In particular, EU is demanding 20% for the top band in a 2-band system, for both wines and spirits; 30% in the middle band and 20% in the top-band, in a 3-band system for wines only.

Agriculture package

The EC document indicates that the EU is not satisfied with India's initial tariff offer on agricultural products, particularly important sectors of poultry, dairy (SMP, WMP, whey and cheeses), olive and other oils, pasta, chocolates, biscuits, confectionary, food preparations including infant formula, roasted cereal preparations, some processed fruit and vegetables.

It appears from the document that the negotiations on agriculture package are yet to be concluded.

Geographical Indications

The EU is very determined on the recognition and protection of its 130 geographical indications (GIs) as per Article 23 of the TRIPS which provides a higher level of protection for GIs for wines and spirits (such as Champagne and Scotch Whisky). The document states that "The situation on GIs is of growing concern. Despite commitments to take action, India is reluctant to enter into any additional political commitment on GIs."

By taking an uncompromising position on GIs, the document contends: “The EU expects that effective registration should take place before entry into force of the agreement. Without such result on GIs, the Commission considers it is not in a position to conclude negotiations. If deemed necessary, conditionality clauses will apply, i.e. the EU will make certain trade concessions conditional on GI protection upon entry into force.”

It further adds: “India will be expected to confirm readiness to apply administrative facilitation to the 130 applications, to notify extension of TRIPS Art 23 level of protection to any non-wine/spirit product category and to confirm readiness to work on political deliverables on GIs within the FTA.”

Government Procurement

The EC document provides a glimpse into the negotiations on the rules pertaining to government procurement. It admits that considerable progress has been made on government procurement text by both trading partners and only a few remaining issues need to be addressed. With regard to procurements related to public sector undertakings in India, the document indicates that the negotiations on market access have not progressed much.

Other areas

The internal document also states that the negotiations are well advanced on Rules of Origin Protocol, Trade Remedies, TBT, SPS, Trade Facilitation and Customs, Competition Policy, Transparency, Dispute Settlement and the Mediation Mechanism. However, more preparatory work is required on the IPR chapter and the

chapter on sustainable development, says the document.

Lack of Transparency and Public Consultation in India

The internal documents of EC may embarrass the Indian authorities who have stoutly maintained that the economic interests of the domestic producers and service providers would be fully protected under the proposed agreement with the EU.

It is of grave concern that the India-EU BTIA negotiations have been marked by a gross absence of

transparency and public consultation in India.

Given these wide-ranging demands emanating from Europe seeking deeper tariff cuts and services liberalization, it is pertinent for the Indian authorities to organise country-wide consultations with state governments, local bodies, small and medium enterprises, farmers’ groups, community organisations and trade unions on an equal footing before inking such a lop-sided agreement with EU.

- Madhyam.

(Continued from Page 5)

been raised about the possibility of more funds being needed to enable Greece to repay the debt and on time. A widely shared view is that by forcing Greece to push through harsher austerity measures to match its debt repayment target, growth will suffer more, making the goal even harder to achieve. A widely shared view is that the cure devised by the ECB and the IMF is worse than the malady.

Confidence in the IMF’s methodology to calculate economic data has been eroded because some of its forecasts have gone haywire. For instance, the Greek economy shrank to the tune of 6.8 per cent in 2011 as against the IMF forecast of 2.6 per cent made as recently as in 2010. Finding fault with the IMF’s ability to properly assess the long term prospects of the countries it lends to, Charles Wyplosz, an international economist, has observed that “the whole debt sustainability analysis is a joke”. “The Greek bailout can’t possibly work” says David Buick, a hard boiled financial expert at the Boston Consulting Group. He thinks it will be difficult for the Greek economy

to grow while complying with the austerity measures. “I believe if a default was to happen now or next year, it would be far less damaging than it would have been two years ago when the European Union was recovering from the banking crisis. Therefore a default now will bruise a little, but it wouldn’t be calamitous.”

The bailout plan has also been sharply criticized by many people on the other side of the fence as being more protective of the banks than of the Greek economy. For its part, Greece is trying to preserve social and political cohesion in the face of growing unrest, political extremism and a devastated economy that is expected to worsen with more austerity. Belt tightening has crossed the limits of endurance. Nobody is paying taxes in Greece today. The wealthiest people - and there are plenty of them in Greece - have jumped onto their escape yachts and left for calmer destinations. And the poorest people are in the underground economy. The feeling is growing in Greece as well as in other informed circles that the malaise in Greece can be healed only with extraordinary measures.

An Open Letter to the Fellow Citizens of India

Dear Sisters and Brothers of India:

Greetings! Please accept our sincere thanks for your keen interest in our struggle and the kind support for our cause. As you know, we, the fisherfolks, farmers, shopkeepers, Dalit workers, beedi-rolling women and others near the southernmost tip of India, have been fighting against the Koodankulam Nuclear power Project (KKNPP) since the late 1980s.

This Russian project was shelved right after the Soviet Union's collapse and taken up again in 1997. The Indian government and Russians have constructed two huge reactors of 1000 MW each without any consent of or consultation with the local people. We have just obtained the outdated Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report after 23 years of long and hard struggle. The Indian nuclear authorities have not shared any basic information about the project with the public. They do not give complete and truthful answers for our questions on the 'daily routine emissions' from these reactors, the amount and management of nuclear waste, fresh water needs, impact of the coolant water on our sea and seafood, decommissioning costs and effects, Russian liability and so forth. We are deeply disturbed by all this.

Our people watched the Fukushima accident of March 11, 2011 on TV at their homes and understood the magnitude and repercussions of a nuclear accident. Right after that on July 1, 2011, the KKNPP announced the 'hot run' of the first reactor that made so much noise and smoke. Furthermore, the authorities asked the people, in a mock drill notice, to cover their nose and mouth and run for their life in case of an emergency. As a result of all these, our people in Koodankulam and Idinthakarai villages made up their minds and took to the streets on their own on August 11, 2011. Then we all together decided to host a day-long hunger strike on August 16 at Idinthakarai and a three-day fast on August 17-19 at Koodankulam. On the 17th itself authorities invited us for talks and asked us to postpone our struggle to the first week of September because of the upcoming Hindu and Muslim festivals. In a few days' time, the chief of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) announced that the first reactor would go critical in September 2011.

So we embarked upon an indefinite hunger strike on September 11, 2011 and our women blocked a state road on September 13 for a few hours when the state and central governments continued to ignore us. The state Chief Minister invited us for talks on September 21 and passed a cabinet resolution the next day asking the central government to halt all the work until the fears and concerns of the local people were allayed. We ended our hunger strike on the 22nd but went on another round of indefinite hunger strike from October 9 to 16 when the talks with the Indian Prime Minister failed. We laid siege in front of the KKNPP on October 13-16, 2011 when the KKNPP authorities

did not halt work at the site as per the Tamil Nadu state cabinet resolution. We ended both the indefinite hunger strike and the siege on October 16 in order for our people to participate in the local body elections on the 17th. From October 18, 2011, we have been on a relay hunger strike continuously (134th day today). We have been carrying out massive rallies, village campaigns, public meetings, seminars, conferences, and other demonstrations such as shaving our heads, cooking on the street, burning the models of the nuclear plants etc. This struggle has been going on for the past 197 days and the morale of the people is still very very high.

There is no foreign country or agency or money involved in this classic people's struggle to defend our right to life and livelihood. Our fishermen, farmers, workers and women make small voluntary donations in cash and kind to sustain our simple Gandhian struggle. Our needs are very few and expenses much less. We only provide safe drinking water to the hunger strikers and visitors. People from all over Tamil Nadu (and sometimes from other parts of India) come on their own arranging their own transportation. For our own occasional travel, we hire local taxis.

Instead of understanding the people's genuine feelings and fulfilling our demands, the government has foisted serious cases of 'sedition' and 'waging war on the Indian state' on the leaders of our movement. There are as many as 180-200 cases on us. There have been police harassment, intelligence officers' stalking, concocted news reports in the pro-government media, abuse of our family members, hate mail, death threats and even physical attack.

Although India is a democracy, our Delhi government has been keen on safeguarding the interests of the MNCs and pleasing some powerful countries such as the United States, Russia, France, etc. The welfare of the 'ordinary citizens' of India does not figure on their list of priorities. The central government and the ruling Congress party stand by the secretive nuclear agreements they have made with all different countries and consider us as stumbling blocks on their road to development. The main opposition party, Bharatiya Janata Party (Hindu nationalist party) is interested in the nuclear weapons program and making India a superpower and hence loves everything nuclear. It is ironic that these two corrupt and communal forces join hands with each other against their own people. They bend backwards to please their American and other bosses but question our integrity and nationalist credentials.

Our leaders and the group of 15 women were physically attacked on January 31, 2012 at Tirunelveli by the Congress thugs and Hindutva Fascists when we had gone for talks with the central government expert team. Now

the government cuts electricity supply so often and so indiscriminately in order to drive home the message that nuclear power plant is needed for additional power. They try to create resentment and opposition among the public against our anti-nuclear struggle.

To put it all in a nutshell, this is a classic David-Goliath fight between the 'ordinary citizens' of India and the powerful Indian government supported by the rich Indian capitalists, MNCs, imperial powers and the global nuclear mafia. They promise FDI, nuclear power, development, atom bombs, security and superpower status. We demand risk-free electricity, disease-free life, unpolluted natural resources, sustainable development and harmless future. They say the Russian nuclear power plants are safe and can withstand earthquakes and tsunamis. But we worry about their side-effects and after-effects. They speak for their scientist friends and business partners and have their eyes on commissions and kickbacks. But we fight for our children and grandchildren, our progeny, our animals and

birds, our land, water, sea, air and the skies.

Please keep us on your prayers/meditations/thoughts/conversations and keep an eye on the developments here in the southernmost tip of India. You can write to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Ms. J. Jayalalitha requesting her to stop this dangerous project. You could also write to our Prime Minister not to drag India in the opposite direction when the whole world is going the 'beyond thermal and nuclear' route. Thanking you once again, we send you our best personal regards and all peaceful wishes.

Cordially,

-S. P. Udayakumar, M. Pushparayan, Fr. M.P. Jesuraj, S. Sivasubramanian, Fr. F. Jayakumar

Peoples' Movement Against Nuclear Energy Idinthakarai
627 104, Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu, India
koodankulam@yahoo.com

Prime Minister's Comment on Koodankulam Struggle

We strongly deplore the PM's recent statement that the people's struggle against Koodankulam nuclear power plant is instigated by foreign agencies and funds. We cannot accept our PM to stoop to such low levels.

This allegation is a clear hint from him that the Indian people who could think on their own to elect the Congress-led UPA in the last general election, have suddenly lost the capacity to think correctly about their safety and energy security. Eminent Indian intellectuals like historian Romila Thapar, economist Amit Bhaduri, diplomat Nirupam Sen, scientist P M Bhargava, and the Indian Institute of Science director P. Balaram have strongly opposed the nuclearisation of India. They surely represent the 'thinking component' of India that Dr. Singh cited.

In reality, it is the Manmohan Singh-led government that is pushing the interests of foreign corporate from Russia, USA and France etc. by giving blanket allocation of Indian territories to them for setting up dangerous nuclear power parks. Similar was the case with the Indo-US nuclear deal, when the government repeatedly tried to bypass the Parliament under pressure from these 'foreign hand'.

Let Indians not lose their hard-earned freedom of independent thoughts and expression to this sold-out government, and condemn the very people who give them the credibility to govern.

In the light of the worldwide shift in public opinion and government policies against nuclear energy, it is only China and India that have significant expansion plans. At the very least it is expected in the light of this global reality that the Indian government which claims to be democratic should establish a complete moratorium on the further development of nuclear energy. It must encourage the widest possible debate on nuclear energy and show respect for the growing voices of democratic dissent, instead of resorting to the cheapest forms of chauvinism and maligning its own people.

- Justice BG Kolse-Patil, Mumbai; Prashant Bhushan, New Delhi; PM Bhargava, Hyderabad; Admiral L. Ramdas, Alibag; Lalita Ramdas, Alibag; Meher Engineer, Kolkata; Rohan D'Souza, Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Asit Das, Researcher and Activist, New Delhi; P K Sundaram, Researcher, New Delhi; Sunil, Samajwadi Jan Parishad, MP; Vaishali Patil, Activist, Konkan (Maharashtra); Praful Bidwai, Journalist, New Delhi; Achin Vanaik, New Delhi; Sumit Chakravarthy, Editor, Mainstream Weekly; Anil Chaudhary, Indian National Social Action Forum (INSAF); Neeraj Jain, Lokayat, Pune; Soumya Dutta, Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha; Nagraj Adve, Delhi Platform, New Delhi; Vijayan MJ, Delhi Forum, New Delhi; Vinuta Gopal, Greenpeace India, Bangalore; Karuna Raina, Greenpeace India, New Delhi; Bauddhaditya, Delhi University; Priyanka Singh, Samata, New Delhi; Yashwir Arya, Azadi Bachao Andolan, Harsh Kapoor, South Asia Citizen's Web; Rajendra Sharma, Hisar, Haryana; Ankur Jaisawal, Journalist, New Delhi; Joe Athilay, New Delhi; Arun Bidani, Delhi Platform, New Delhi; Bhupendra Singh Raut, NAPM; Amit Tharayath Vergese, Delhi Forum, New Delhi; Seela M Mahapatra, Delhi Solidarity Group, New Delhi; Tarini Manchanda, New Delhi.

Jaitapur no thank you!

Anny Poursinoff intervened in the French Assembly on 9 February to oppose the deal between France and India on civil nuclear energy and extend support to the people of Jaitapur who refuse the installation by Areva of two EPR power plants in a seismic zone 400 km from Bombay. This text was not supposed to be discussed, but at the request of the Green Party, the opposition was able to impose a debate. The text of the speech is below. (Translated from French for DiaNuke.org by Dalel Benbabaali)

I thank my colleagues in the opposition who, at our request, made this debate possible.

Indeed, nothing about nukes is trivial. The Court of Auditors recently agreed with the environmentalists on the hidden costs of this industry.

We are now asked to facilitate intellectual exchange on civil nuclear energy between France and India.

In fact, we fear that the agreement is linked to the installation by Areva of EPR nuclear power plants in Jaitapur, an area rich in biodiversity and a seismic zone, 400 kilometers from Bombay, the Indian economic metropolis.

A few days before the anniversary of Fukushima, after the report of the Nuclear Safety Authority showing that power plants are not infallible, our Indian friends themselves have doubts: they asked Areva to strengthen the security of computer systems.

Indeed, in a country ranked fourth as a terrorist target, the risk of attacks adds to the risk of accidents.

But the EPR is particularly dangerous. It produces plutonium and uses MOX, whose radioactivity is 5 to 7 times superior to that of uranium fuel.

Through this agreement, we are asked therefore to take the risk of a new Fukushima and another Hiroshima.

No, I'm not exaggerating.

You know it, India and Pakistan have developed nuclear weapons. These two rivals have not signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

You also know that France is selling weapons to both countries - let us remember the case of Karachi or the recent sale of over a hundred fighter jets to India.

The agreement on intellectual property could open the door to the transfer of technology which could be used for military purposes, whether uranium processing and enrichment or plutonium production.

Yet, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, last June, banned the export of sensitive equipments to countries that have not signed the nonproliferation treaty.

So we are asked to take the risk of breaking international laws.

The French government is ready to do anything to sell plants!

I say here solemnly: I hope that negotiations with India on nuclear power will fail.

Democracy requires it: the local population is opposed to the installation of Areva power plants. A protester has already paid with his life!

Scientific and economic reasons require it as well.

Five years of delay for the EPR in Finland! Four years of delay in Flamanville! An addition that never ceases to grow!

Why offer our Indian friends such a poisoned gift?

Our cooperation should be around peaceful activities such as the fight against global warming, instead of focusing on the energies of death, arms sales and nukes!

"We must safeguard the jobs created by Areva!", my pro-nuclear colleagues will say.

But technology transfers, whose patents India does not recognize, does nothing to protect employees of the French nuclear sector. The Indians have excellent scientists and excellent engineers!

As for the excuse of economic development, it does not stand. Local

people do not get the jobs generated by nukes, studies in Tamil Nadu have shown.

The people of Jaitapur understood it: they refuse to be expropriated, they do not want these plants.

Neither do we!

I'll try to say it in Hindi: Jaitapur, ji nahi!

Jaitapur no thank you!

The French government showed a criminal bad faith. On the one hand it proclaims that there is no risk with nuclear power, on the other it pressurizes its Indian counterparts to change their legislation.

Indian provisions state that the manufacturer is responsible in case of disaster.

After Bhopal, we understand the wisdom of the Indian government vis-à-vis unscrupulous Western industrial partners.

Now the President of the French Republic himself asked the Indian Prime Minister of India to relax the law. Why? Because Areva does not want to be liable for a nuclear accident in Jaitapur?

Neither do we, we do not want to bear this responsibility.

But the best way to avoid another Fukushima is to give up the building these plants, which are located, I repeat, in a seismic zone ... like Fessenheim!

French environmentalists have expressed their solidarity with the protests of Indian civil society.

I request you, dear colleagues, to do the same, and to vote against this text.

In France as in India, future generations must be protected from disasters and nuclear waste.

People's Participation and Human Development: Challenges of Reconstructing Indian Polity

Ravi Kiran Jain

The Constitution of India as initially enacted preferred Representative Democracy with a centralized system of governance. Experience of 61 years of working of the Constitution shows that Representative Democracy prevents people's participation in matters of formulation of policies and governance. As the root meaning of the word indicates, democracy is the "rule of the people." A Representative Democracy is not the "rule of the people."

In India, all along, development as a process has always been affected from the top down style of functioning. Naturally, because along with our freedom we had inherited a bureaucracy that was designed by the British to rule, not to serve. The British way of doing things had always been to get things done through a government department and after independence we merely continued the system. Unfortunately, we forgot that the biggest asset of India is its people. Any sensible government must learn to unleash the energy of its people and get them to perform instead of trying to get a bureaucracy to perform.

The architect of 'Operation Flood', the largest dairy development programme in the world, Dr Verghese Kurien, in his autobiography says: "What is democracy after all? It is certainly not what it has, unfortunately, come to mean in

our country: a government of the bureaucrats, by the bureaucrats and for the bureaucrats. This brand of democracy has no space for people. True democracy will emerge when we allow the people to manage. And only when the people begin to take control of their lives will rural development gain momentum, when goods and services produced by rural areas will get better terms of trade than goods and services produced in the cities. Only when our farmers are involved in the processes of development will they be able command their destiny. True development is the development of women and men. What we have to recognize is that 74 percent of our population are rural people who depend on agriculture, and if we want our country to develop, we have to ensure that these farmers and rural people develop."

When our country fought for its freedom from the British rule, it evolved leadership of a quality that any nation anywhere in the world would have been proud of. When Nehru took over as the first Prime Minister, people had tremendous faith in their leaders. There were stalwarts in political field and they made efforts to set India on the road to social revolution. Nehru's plan of ending poverty, ignorance, diseases and inequality of opportunities could not take off 'as the first task' even during his life-time. People had faith in him, but they had developed a sense of discontent

during his last days. People were highly disillusioned with the Congress regime as the problems with which we became independent continued to stare in the faces of the masses. Independence meant—independence not only from the foreign yoke, but independence from want, independence from diseases, independence from ignorance, independence from exploitation, and, in brief, sublime happiness, peace and prosperity. There were stalwarts in the Opposition also. People started looking to the alternative. The political ideology of Communists was based on western thoughts and so was Nehru's. Democratic socialism, suited to the Indian conditions, started emerging under the leadership of Acharya Narendra Dev, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan. Discontentment against the Congress government was acquiring great momentum under their leadership.

However, the governance, with a centralized system, was going on under the leadership of Nehru. Then, as noticed by, Granville Austin in his book 'Working of A Democratic Constitution': "The early hours of 11 January 1966 brought India two ends and a beginning. The life of Jawaharlal Nehru's successor, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri ended that morning in Tashkent where he had gone to sign an agreement with Pakistan, ending the previous years' war between the two countries. Shastri's death

also ended the Nehru years, for he had led the country in the Nehru tradition, even while being his own man as Prime Minister. A new era, one that of would be marked by confrontation over institutional and personal power began with the arrival of in the Prime Minister's office of Nehru's daughter, Mrs. Indira Gandhi."

It started appearing in 1960s that the centralized system of governance which was adopted by Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel was leading to the establishment of a strong bureaucratic structure, day by day. The power completely slipped into the hands of bureaucracy between 1971 and 1977.

Dr. Rammanohar Lohia used to speak of Chaukhamba Raj, which according to Dr. Lohia would be of four pillars: (i) village, (ii) district (iii) state and (iv) centre, which would be inter-dependent and inter-connected. In 1963, Dr. Lohia initiated a famous debate of two and a half annas income of 27 crore people of this country when the total population of this country was about 50 crores. Jawaharlal Nehru said in reply that it was 6 annas. Till 1967 any common man could aspire to contest the election of the Lok Sabha. The general election schedule for early 1967 would be the fourth since Independence, and the first, since Jawaharlal Nehru's death. The 1967 general elections cut the Congress majority in the Lok Sabha to twentyfive. It lost 264 seats in state assemblies and its majority in eight states.

Till 1967 the elections of the Parliament and all the State Assemblies used to be held simultaneously and much money was not required to contest election.

Politics was an instrument of service. The elections used to be contested on ideologies of political parties. In 1967 elections Congress suffered reverses as a result of anti-Congress wave. It started becoming apparent that in the next elections which were due in 1972, the Congress party was bound to lose power in the Centre and many states.

In 1969, Indira Gandhi split the Indian National Congress into two parties, the one led by Indira Gandhi came to be known as Congress(I) and the other that comprised the then stalwarts in the Congress, which came to be known as Congress(O). In 1977, the Congress(O) merged into the Janata Party and thereafter ceased to exist.

In 1971, Indira Gandhi, politically shrewd as she was, was fully able to sense the impatience among the people to remove poverty gave a deceptive slogan of "garibi hatao" delinked the parliamentary elections from the assembly surprisingly by preponing the same, which otherwise were due in 1972, dumped huge amount of money in election for her party candidates and secured thumping majority giving severe blow to the process of political polarisation on ideological basis. But even during that period, a few had realized that poverty and disparity was not something which would be removed through any political jugglery of words, often used in this country to infuse illusory optimism among the poor masses by offering them such slogans (read lollypops). The hard truth is that poverty still stares in the faces of crores of hapless people of this country.

Indira Gandhi had a confrontationist strategy to concentrate power in her own hands

which led to the centralization of the Centre-State relations in the executive branch under command in New Delhi. Individuals' rights were pitted against the society's needs for a social revolution, as they had been in her predecessors' time. Although politically secure from 1971 onwards as she had never been, Smt. Gandhi moved away, from Constitutionalism towards absolutism. The distribution of power between the three branches of government was gravely disturbed and a process of dominating the Parliament and weakening the judiciary was started. Granville Austin in "Working a Democratic Constitution" in Chapter 7-"Indira Gandhi :In context and in power " has said "The executive branch came to dominate Parliament to such a degree that Parliament lost any effective identity of its own. And, authority within the executive became concentrated in the Prime minister's office and then was exercised from Mrs Gandhi's residence, to the exclusion of all but a few. The two branches, if still they could be called that, attacked the third branch, the judiciary, intending to end its function as a co-equal branch of Government."

She struck a grievous blow to the independence of the judiciary on April 25, 1973, the day after the Keshvanand Bharti decision of the Supreme Court by appointing A. N. Ray as the new Chief Justice of India by superseding Shelat, Hegde and Grover, who, by convention of seniority, were next in line for the position. It was an act of extreme centralization of power as it amounted to making the apex court subservient to her government. During this process of institutional decay at the hands of Smt. Gandhi came the courageous

judgement of Justice JML Sinha of the Allahabad High Court on June 12, 1975, unseating her from the Lok Sabha, which was followed by the imposition of the Emergency on June 26, 1975. The Supreme Court was to be no longer supreme. This became apparent by the incredible order passed by the ADM Jabalpur during the Emergency. By the time Indira Gandhi was compelled to announce elections in 1977, the institutional decay had become complete. The task of recruiting 'committed judges' in the Supreme Court and High Courts, however, remained unaccomplished which she accomplished after her re-emergence in 1980.

The Allahabad Judgment unseating Indira Gandhi came in the wake of her political opponents led by Jayaprakash Narayan agitating against her government. Soon after the Allahabad verdict, Jayaprakash Narayan and a coalition of political leaders launched a massive national movement of civil disobedience. So intense was the political opposition to her that not many expected Smt. Gandhi to last long as Prime Minister. She responded by proclaiming Emergency.

During the Emergency hundreds of politicians were arrested and put in jail, the Constitution was amended to suit the prime minister's whims and fancies, laws were modified to overturn court orders, buildings were razed, people were forcibly sterilized and the press was muzzled. Those were the days when even the slightest dissent was not forgiven.

In January 1977, while announcing fresh elections, the

Prime Minister recalled that for 'some eighteen months, our beloved country was on the brink of disaster'. The emergency had been imposed 'because the nation was far from normal'. Now that it 'is being nursed back to health', elections were permissible.

Smt. Gandhi announced elections in 1977 and the suppressed anger among the people against her burst out in the open. On 24th March 1977, two days after Smt. Gandhi's government had resigned and she had assumed a caretaker role, Morarji Desai took the oath as Prime Minister.

"The Janata Party came to power on a wave of hyperbole, with talk of a second freedom from authoritarian rule and a resounding restoration of democracy. Almost from its first week in office, the party seemed determined to squander this goodwill. It was soon noticed that in both the Centre and the States Janata ministers were grabbing the best government bungalows, raiding the Public Works Department for air-conditioners and carpets, organizing lavish parties and weddings for their relatives, running up huge telephones and electricity bills, travelling abroad at the slightest pretext (or no pretext at all). Even traditionally anti-Congress journals were writing about the 'death of idealism' within Janata, of how it had so quickly become a 'political party of the traditional type,' its members 'interested more and more in positions and perquisites and less and less in affecting society'. It was being said that while it had taken the Congress thirty years to abandon its principles, Janata had lost them

within a year of its formation" says historian Ramchandra Guha in 'INDIA AFTER GANDHI'.

A problematic government from the beginning, the approaching end to Janata's career became painfully apparent in June 1979 as it bled from massive defection.

"Charan Singh's foolish Prime Ministerial ambitions came to an end on 20th August when Indira Gandhi pulled the rug from under him. Apparently calculating that she could bring about the elections that would return her to office. Upon learning this, Charan Singh's cabinet decided in emergency session not to face a vote, and Charan Singh drove to Rashtrapati Bhawan to tender the government's resignation. He advised the President to dissolve parliament and call elections. The Janata Party government thus could not survive on account of inherent contradictions within the political leaders, who by sheer opportunism had shared the power at the Centre", says Graneville Austin in 'Working A Democratic Constitution'

(to be concluded)

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-
Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on
Mumbai Bank
in favour of
JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai 400 007

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 67 No. 7
March 11, 2012

A Vote for Change

S.Viswam

Power rests with states
Kuldip Nayar

UP Will Break the Mould!
D. K. Giri

**Scrap the Kudankulam and
Jaitapur Nuclear Plants!!!**
Neeraj Jain

**Callenges of Reconstructing
Indian Polity - II**
Ravi Kiran Jain

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

No month passes in India when elections are not being held in some state or the other and/or for some local self-governing body or the other. Such elections testify to the growing democratization of the polity. Every time an election concludes successfully anywhere, we need to congratulate those who conduct and those who participate in the polls. Time was when no election was violence or tension-free. Those days of fear, intimidation, malpractice, and interference seem way behind, thanks to two factors. First, the extraordinary tightening of the electoral laws and processes and punishments for violations, coupled with the strict enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct. Second, the mounting awareness of the voters of the significance of elections and their commendable adjustment to the niceties and nuances of the electoral processes. Indeed, the Indian voter came of age long ago, and in every election, regardless of the institution he is choosing members, regardless of the level of his literacy, regardless of whether he is an urban or a rural voter, he has demonstrated his discernment, discretion and disposition in clearest possible terms. The results of the just concluded round of polls to five state assemblies confirm this unmistakably.

Not only has the voter turn-out in all the states, particularly in the largest of them, Uttar Pradesh, has been far higher than the national averages for Lok Sabha and legislature polls, but the turn-out of women voters exceeded that of men in each of the states that witnessed elections. This is heart-warming. Women have justified their empowerment at the lower levels after the implementation of the panchayati raj legislation. They are nowadays increasingly demonstrating their comprehension of the value of the vote in changing their lives and environment. This speaks well for the future of democracy in India.

India will again be in the election mode quite soon when elections will fall due in some states. In 2014, the Big Round will be upon us when we will be asked to elect a new Lok Sabha. Meanwhile, elections will continue to be held for lower level, but nonetheless important as drivers and motivators of democracy institutions. Indeed, elections, electioneering, and the ballot box have become signposts for the growth and entrenchment of democracy in India. Not many countries in the democratic world can boast of the successes that India has claimed in the last six decades of independent existence. Whatever the

flip side of the elections, and there are some in every polling exercise, we need to remember the positive aspects every time an election is held successfully, which means that there being virtually no complaints of malpractices. From that aspect also, the just concluded round was noteworthy.

Third, India began its electoral history with simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and all the state assemblies. While it has been possible for elections to be held to Parliament once every five years, and occasionally mid-term, elections to the assemblies could not be confined to a pre-determined time-frame. Looking at the elaborate time-frame that was necessary to hold free and fair and fully secure elections in UP, India's most populous though not largest state, it seems that future elections in large states will need not days but weeks for completion. This is because time is required to make fool-proof security arrangements. The time taken does cause some frustrations and inconvenience but this is preferable to risks resulting from poor logistics and imperfect security arrangements. For the first time, the Election Commission spaced out the UP polls in six phases. In retrospect, it was a practical and wise decision.

That said, it only remains to stress that the country's political leadership can no longer take the voter for granted. You cannot fool the people any more as the leadership tended to do in the hoary days of yore when the Congress claimed that even a lamp post draped in the Congress flag would win the election. The voters in UP and Goa reacted strongly, decisively against corruption and brought down the

(Continued on Page 6)

Between the lines

Power rests with states

Kuldip Nayar

State elections may not predict the shape of next Lok Sabha in 2014, but they do reflect the mood of the electorate. UP, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur which went to the polls indicate that the ruling Congress is declining rapidly. The party is nowhere in UP despite the Indira Gandhi's family descending on the state in full strength. Punjab and Uttarakhand, which were expected to go to the Congress, have slipped from its hands. The party has been routed in Goa and the only consolation prize is Manipur where feuding factions do not allow a government run for long.

In fact, the other national alternative, Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) has done only slightly better. It is third in UP, slightly above the Congress, and neck and neck with the Congress in Uttarakhand. The BJP can claim to be a winner in Punjab but that is because it is riding the bandwagon of the Akali Dal. Otherwise, the BJP has come down from 19 to 12.

The obvious lesson to learn from the verdicts is that the national parties are losing space to those in the states, which represent local aspirations. The success of Mulayam Singh Yadav's Samajwadi Party in UP casts a shadow on the prospects of both the Congress and the BJP in a state, which has 80 Lok Sabha seats in a house of 543. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) of the outgoing chief minister Mayawati looked at one time an avalanche of Dalits

sweeping the rest. But the avarice had the better of her and she has ruined the chance of a Dalit ever becoming Prime Minister.

The Shiromani Akali Dal's return to power in Punjab strengthens the belief that the work at the grassroots is what counts ultimately. However, the victory for the Akali Dal, as that of Samajwadi Party, sends a message to the Congress or, for that matter, to national parties that they can no longer ignore or bypass the state parties. Their consultation is essential before framing economic and social policies. The five-year plan has to be built from below. Apart from ignoring sentiments prevailing on the ground, the Congress had to pay dear at the polls for the scams and the price rise. The state parties have been able to convince the electorate that corruption and high cost of living is not their doing but that of those who rule at the centre.

It looks as if the states are waking up to the clout they have because of the following of their people. Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik has already raised the banner of revolt against the centre for possessing too much power. He has been supported by many chief ministers in his demand. Several chief ministers, including Mamata Banerjee from West Bengal, feel that the centre must have the states in the picture when it establishes organizations which require the support of their law and order machinery.

Recently, the anti-terrorism setup the centre was planning did not have prior consent of chief ministers. Still Home Minister P. Chidambaram convened a meeting of chief secretaries and Director Generals of Police. Belonging to the all-India services and controlled by the centre, both services are manageable. The centre has to realize that the real state boss is the chief minister and he or she must be kept in the picture.

Whether a non-BJP and non-Congress front comes into being is a matter of conjecture, though there are signals of it. Yet there is no running away from the fact that the central government apes to take action without even informing the states. Federalism is a buzzword. What it means is that more powers should vest in the states and despite the Sarkaria Commission report on centre-state relations, New Delhi runs roughshod over the states.

I recall the advice of Ghous Bux Bezenjo, a Pakistani leader, who warned me nearly 40 years ago that India should learn from Pakistan and transfer all subjects except defence, foreign affairs, communication and currency to the states. This is what the Anandpur Sahib resolution of the Akali Dal said or was even once the demand of the CPI(M) when it ruled over West Bengal. But the Congress haughtily rejected it without realizing that there is no go from decentralization.

The polity needs a consensus. It can be developed through humility, but not arrogance, which has become part of the Congress culture. How can Prime Minister Manmohan Singh handle parliament sessions in the next few days if he or his party does not understand that the state

(Continued on Page 6)

UP Will Break the Mould!

D. K. Giri

Much-awaited results of the elections in five states that went to the polls are out. As usual, the results have defied the pollsters, and so, have surprised political watchers and politicians. The verdict in the North-Eastern state of Manipur was predictable, in Goa unpredicted, in Punjab historic, in Uttarakhand a surprise, and in UP significant as it promises to break the mould in Indian politics, that is, challenging the hegemony of two major national parties at the Centre - BJP and the INC. Also, UP is politically the biggest state in India with population of 199 plus million, bigger than Brazil (192m). It sends 80 Members of Parliament out of 543 and has had nine Prime Ministers out of fifteen since 1947. Therefore all political eyes were focused on UP and of all the parties, INC had put all its might to begin to regain its hold in UP. Let us analyze the election results in the states, but in UP in particular, for some of the reasons I just mentioned.

Manipur: Weak Opposition

The Congress won the state for the third consecutive time despite several obstacles such as threat and "ban" from the terrorist outfits, and a combined opposition from 11 political parties. Out of total 60 seats, Congress bagged 42 - an addition of 12 to 30 seats it had got in 2007, Trinamool Congress under the leadership of West Bengal Chief Minister got seven seats, Naga People's Front four, Nationalist Congress Party one and Lok Janshakti Party one. The Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh won the elections for the third consecutive

time. The results prove that people of Manipur, like anywhere else, were really fed up and frustrated with militant activities; they want peace and stability in the state. They feel that INC, the ruling party at the Centre could provide assistance for peace and security. The Chief Minister was known to strive hard for the development of the state. However, more important factor was the weak opposition to the ruling Congress in the state. Also interesting to watch is the victory of Trinamool Congress which will be the main opposition party in the Assembly. Mamata Benarjee is making quiet inroads into the seven North-Eastern States. If it plays its cards well, it is likely to pose a challenge to the Congress supremacy in these states.

GOA: No Surprise

Defying so-called caste and religious mobilization of voters in Indian politics, the catholic voters in Goa deserted Congress and voted BJP to majority to form the Government. Out of 40 seats, BJP secured 21 as against 14 in 2007 and Congress got 9 - it had 19 in 2007; Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party, an ally of BJP got three and others have seven. The Congress party was sure of retaining power in Goa and is now wondering what really went wrong. But people outside Congress could see clearly that the party was going to be voted out for serious allegations of corruption, illegal mining and 'family raj' - rank nepotism by Congress leaders in Goa. Four members of powerful Alemao family - three contesting

on Congress tickets and one on Nationalist Congress Party - were in the fray. In a 40-member Assembly, twelve tickets were given by Congress to five families of Congress leaders. Goans thought that was the height of nepotism and concentration of power. A political commentator said, "the family raj was Congress's waterloo". On the other hand, BJP presented a qualified and reputed candidate for the post of Chief Minister. Manohar Parrikar, an IITian, promised a cleaner administration and went out to woo the Catholic Christian voters, disenchanted with nepotism and corruption.

Uttarakhand: Divided House

In Uttarakhand, BJP was written off by observers but the party managed to come at par with Congress, creating a hung Assembly. Out of 70, Congress has 32, BJP 31, BSP three and others have four MLAs. The major setback is the defeat of the incumbent BJP Chief Minister B.C Khanduri. He was brought back last September replacing Ramesh Pokhriyal, who was facing corruption allegations. Khanduri, a retired army officer has been a prominent BJP leader in the hill-state; He was also a Union Minister. Although he lost his own seat, he managed to keep BJP in the race to form government. A lot will depend upon the three independent MLAs one of Uttarakhand Kranti Dal, which was an ally of BJP, while three independents are rebel Congress candidates. Mayawati's BSP has three seats, four down from seven seats it held in 2007. Like in other states (except in Punjab where the electoral arithmetic played out differently) allegation of scams hit the ruling party. Yet, BJP retrieved its position magically under the leadership of Khanduri.

Punjab: Historic Verdict

The Congress party is at a complete loss to find out why it could not form the Government in Punjab, when all predictions pointed to a Congress victory in the state. The chief spokesperson of the Congress was admitting in the media that the party was really shocked and surprised over Punjab. Out of 117 seats, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) got 56, Congress 46, BJP 12, and the rest three. The verdict is historic because SAD-BJP is the first ruling party (coalition) to win for the second consecutive term in the last four decades. There may be several local dynamics that influenced the verdict, which will surface in a deeper analysis. For now, visible indications are that Parkash Singh Badal, a veteran election war horse created a development platform, managed to pass the buck to BJP in terms of anti-incumbency - BJP is down from 19 to 12 seats - and portray his estranged nephew Manpreet Singh Badal, who had left SAD to form People's Party of Punjab (PPP), as a deserter. The politicians who leave or split the party are not taken nicely by the voters who treat it as betrayal, be it Raj Thackeray of Maharashtra, Amar Singh in UP, or Manpreet Singh Badal in Punjab. The Congress party was also riven with dissidence, the rebel candidates split the votes. As per the reports, PPP also cut into BJP/Congress votes instead of SAD. The voters treated PPP as a traitor, and rallied behind SAD for another five years.

UP: Turning Point

The most significant results have come from Uttar Pradesh. Although it was widely predicted that Samajwadi Party would emerge as the single largest party in 403-member Assembly, all opinion

polls gave SP maximum of 185 seats. I have been consistently maintaining that these poll predictions made without arduous survey and a rigorous method are not authentic. Even in the 2007 elections, no one gave Mayawati's BSP more than 150 seats, whereas she got 206 seats. The story repeats in 2012. Media and pollsters hyped the Congress campaign which had pulled all the stops to make a bigger dent.

Let us have a closer look at the major players in Uttar Pradesh before we ponder about the new political scenario that is likely to emerge after the massive victory of SP in Uttar Pradesh. The tally of seats out of 403: SP got 225 (it had 97 in 2007), the maximum SP ever got; the BSP got 79 (it had 206), BJP 47 against 51 in 2007 and Congress 28 - a gain of just 6 seats over 22. How did the actors play it out during the campaign?

The Congress went all out to retrieve Uttar Pradesh. Before the election, it promoted its state level ministers to the cabinet rank in Delhi, inducted new ministers from UP, Rahul Gandhi toured the state extensively, starting from Bhatta Parsaul, a village in UP near Delhi, where there was police firing in a farmers' agitation. Rahul Gandhi dined with and discussed issues with scheduled caste families in remote villages, made it his personal mission to win Uttar Pradesh, his sister Priyanka Vadra who is otherwise a house-wife made guest appearances in the campaign, her husband who is otherwise a businessman felt called upon to enter politics despite denials from Priyanka. The family was in full force to drum up support. The star campaigner was Rahul Gandhi. During the campaign, two of the Congress Union Ministers offered

9 percent quota for the Muslims inviting censure from the Election Commission. That gave them a lot of publicity. From the hype in the media, it was widely predicted that Congress would get over 100 seats. But, although media plays a great role in our democracy, they are never close to call when it comes to elections. Indian electorate is too vast and shrewd to predict - a small sample in urban pockets in opinion polls cannot be representative. The outcome can be only speculative. So Congress was all in media, not amongst the voters: it did not have workers to mobilize voters, it did not have a so-called vote bank like BSP, SP or even BJP. It lost in UP, though unpredictably badly yet inevitably. The only saving grace is that it has 4 per cent increase in popular votes.

BSP got mired in scams. It had a single party majority in 2007, constructed with a new social combination, and had promised better and cleaner governance. But the party threw away the mandate in ostentation and corruption. Mayawati became impatient to immortalize herself and her mentors with big statues. She did punish her cabinet colleagues by putting some of them behind bars for misdeeds and corruption, but she herself did not rise to the occasion and got cocooned in narcissistic politics. It is a pity as she was seen to be an able administrator and stronger in law and order, which was an issue in UP. Of course, she was the main target of lethal attacks by Congress. There is also an unconfirmed viewpoint from some observers that Mayawati was aggressively promoting Buddhism and Baba Saheb Ambedkar, which alarmed RSS who shifted its votes to the winning party - SP, away from BJP, that is why BJP's tally fell from 51 in 2007 to 47 in 2012. This gave

a much bigger margin to SP.

BJP was caught badly in infighting. They did not have a candidate to project as the leader or the Chief Minister. They brought in Uma Bharati to soar up its base amongst Other Backward Classes making her the main campaigner, but for some inexplicable reason held back their most successful Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi from campaigning, could not forge an alliance with their partner in Bihar - JD(U). The biggest mistake, however, was to bring in the tainted ministers who were expelled from BSP. This single mistake compromised their position vis-à-vis Congress and BSP against whom they were fighting on anti-corruption platform. So BJP became leaderless which went down badly with the electorate, Uma Bharati was imported from Madhya Pradesh. A party which was led by towering leaders like Vajpayee, could not project a leader in UP. It is true UP politics is divided between SP and BSP but not long ago BJP had two Chief Ministers. In the State elections, BJP has done very well in Punjab, Goa and Uttarakhand, and could have done better in UP if they had remained united and avoided strategic blunders.

Samajwadi Party is the clear winner beyond expectations. It did everything right to win this huge victory. It got rid of its controversial one-time powerful general secretary Amar Singh who was always in the company of the rich and the glamour of film stars. That was his strength but became the weakness for SP. They got rid of Kalyan Singh, an ex-Chief Minister of BJP and retrieved their Muslim base. While Mulayam represented the rural base and his son Akhilesh attracted the urban middle

class voters through his appeal of modernity as well as moderation. He ran a sophisticated campaign with modern technological back up and made his party eschew musclemen and mafia influence. Akhilesh played a brilliant role in changing the image, composition and functioning of the party while Mulayam Singh lent tradition, experience and leadership to the party, standing tall amongst his rivals with his rich experience. Akhilesh Yadav's hard and quiet work paid rich dividends. He covered 10,000 km on his "cycle of hope" addressing 800 rallies in six months.

The power in UP now alternates between BSP and SP. This time BSP got tainted with scams, weakened by attacks from other three parties, suffered from anti-incumbency, made mistakes. On the other hand, SP transformed itself, corrected its mistakes and wrested power. Congress made noise, but went down with a whimper, and BJP made self-goals, so both the major national political parties got further marginalized in UP.

New Scenario

Most probably UP results will change the political combination in the country. Coalition politics has become the order of the day, but both major coalitions at the Centre are held by Congress and BJP. There was a Third Front without Congress and BJP which had short stints of power with three Prime Ministers, V.P. Singh, Deve Gowda, and I.K. Gujaral. There was also an attempt in 2009 elections to recreate the Third Front, but at that time, SP was in opposition in UP, and the initiative was taken by CPM. A viable Third Front can be led only by Social Democrats or the Centrist leaders like V. P. Singh or I. K.

Gujaral who came from Congress, certainly not by the Communists who have limited appeal beyond Bengal and Kerala, which they have, in the meantime, lost. With a comfortable majority for five years, Mulayam Singh Yadav, who is a Social Democrat, will be free to think of national politics. He was a Union Minister and has been at the helm of affairs, a 'king maker' at the Centre. He has saved the Congress-

led government to keep BJP out in the Centre. This seems to be his last innings in the long political career. Age catches up with everyone - he will be 73 coming November, and nearly 79 at the end of 5-year term of his government - and hence one would expect him to go all out to install a Third Front government at the Centre in 2014. Congress will be further marginalized as their only strength - the "Indira family's"

popularity - is on the decline. BJP will remain in the States, but not at the Centre. Also, both Congress and BJP have been opportunistic and have had almost equal share of allegations of scams. So, it is only the Third Front that will provide a credible government in the Centre and the UP results have raised this possibility more than before.

(Continued from Page 2)

ruling governments with brutal vengeance. It was not a pro-SP vote in UP as much as it was a clear anti-Mayawati vote. Mayawati went overboard in self-glorification and organized graft—of elephantine proportions. She was shown the door. In Goa, the Congress was thrown out because of the corruption of the ruling Congress. In both the states, it was clear that the people had decided against the ruling dispensations on their own. Anna Hazare need not take any credit. Indeed, people have voted against the ruling establishments in areas where neither Hazare nor his team stepped foot.

The most dominant impression left behind by the results is that the Congress party, its leaders (both young and old, but particularly young) have been humbled beyond compare. The Congress lost a state and won Manipur, but in totality its performance was depressing. The Rahul-Priyanka bubble has burst. Time was when you travelled only through Congress-ruled states in any journey east to west or north to south. Today, you travel more through opposition-controlled states. In due time, not many states will remain under Congress domination, given the way the cookie has been

crumbling of late. The Gandhi family has no magic left, leave alone a magic wand to convert people from anti-Congress to pro-Congress sentiment. The party needs to come down to earth speedily and look at itself all over once again, disregarding the Sonia-Rahul-Priyanka aura which seems to be fading away...

(Continued from Page 3)

elections have given the regional parties a new sense of confidence and they want to assert themselves? He has to reach out to them when important bills, including the budget, have to get the approval of parliament.

The immediate problem that the ruling Congress faces is the election of President due in the middle of this year. Then there is the election of the Vice-President. The Congress cannot impose its choice on the parties and pick up non-entities for the top positions. Regional parties will need to be wooed. In any case, a non-Congress person having ability and eminence will ideally fill the office of President. This requires all the tact and charm that the Congress can exert. But the party is too much haunted by a mid-term poll and looks

pathetically clueless and without any new idea.

Some fear that a weak centre may encourage fissiparous tendencies. This is wrong because the states are an integral part of the country. They do not want to turn up to Delhi for every small concession. Today they have to do it and they have resident commissioners to pursue their projects. Whichever party comes to power at the centre feels it must rule like the governor general of the British days. The people are more conscious of their rights. They know the value of their vote and this explains why almost 60 per cent of the electorate, more women than men, went to polling stations to exercise their franchise.

Madhu Dandavate

By

B. Vivekanandan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007.

No More Fukushimas! No More Chernobyls!! Scrap the Kudankulam and Jaitapur Nuclear Plants!!!

Neeraj Jain

Japan is paying the price for the arrogance and greed of its nuclear industry and politicians. Despite suffering the horrors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear accidents, the Japanese nuclear industry and politicians bamboozled the Japanese people into believing that nuclear power plants were safe, clean and green, were a sustainable solution for Japan's energy crisis. On March 11, catastrophe visited the Fukushima Nuclear Plant in Japan, blowing their claims sky high.

On that day, one year ago, a massive earthquake measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale struck the nuclear plant; it was followed an hour later, by a huge tsunami with waves as high as 14 metres. The earthquake disrupted the cooling systems of the reactors; the tsunami worsened the accident. A complex series of events ultimately lead to fuel meltdown in three of the six reactors of the plant. In at least two of the reactors, there have been explosions in the spent fuel ponds, and some of their deadly radioactive inventory has been released into the atmosphere. Spent fuel pool contains, among other terrible elements, plutonium, which is one of the most dangerous elements known, with a radioactive half-life of over 24000 years! Less than one-millionth of a gram of Plutonium if inhaled can cause lung cancer.

Fukushima is clearly the greatest industrial disaster the world has ever seen. It is estimated that nearly 10 lakh people have died worldwide

due to the Chernobyl nuclear accident over the period 1986-2004, according to a report published by the New York Academy of Sciences in 2009; and the numbers will continue to increase in the coming decades because of continued radiation from the long-lived radionuclides that have leaked from the accident. Extrapolate this for Fukushima, which is nearly three times as big as Chernobyl, and the scale of the disaster becomes apparent.

Radiation from the Fukushima plant has spread to all across the globe. Not only countries near Japan, but also countries far away across the Pacific Ocean, from Canada to the USA and Mexico, and even Switzerland, Iceland and France, have detected traces of radioactivity from Japan's crippled plant in their soil, air and water. In Japan, in the region around the stricken reactor, high levels of radioactive elements, including cesium and strontium, have been found in milk, several vegetables, and in tea gardens as far away as 400 kms from the plant; the deadly plutonium has been detected in rice fields 50 kms away from the plant. Cesium-137 concentrates in the muscles to cause cancer and remains radioactive for 600 years; strontium-90 causes breast and bone cancer and remains radioactive for 560 years. It has now been revealed that the radioactive releases were so serious that the authorities were thinking of evacuating Tokyo, Japan's capital, which is 240 kilometers away from the plant.

Nearly 1 lakh people living in a 20 kms radius around the plant have been evacuated. These people are never going to return to their homes. According to European medical experts, of the 10 million people living in a radius of 200 kms from the plant, at least 4 lakh people are going to develop cancers in the coming 50 years, with 2 lakh being diagnosed in the next 10 years. By choosing nuclear energy as an energy option, the Japanese political leadership have condemned the people of Japan to suffer epidemics of cancer, leukaemia and genetic disease for the rest of time.

Nuclear Energy is Deathly

The plain truth about nuclear energy is – it is not safe, clean and green. On the contrary, it is, to use a phrase in the Bhagwad Gita, a 'Destroyer of Worlds'.

Nuclear energy is generated in a nuclear reactor when nuclear fuel (uranium 235) kept in the reactor core is split up, releasing huge amounts of heat. This heat is used to produce steam, which in turn is used to drive a turbine to generate electricity.

During this fission process, more than 200 types of new, highly radioactive elements are created. The reactor core of a 1000 MW nuclear power plant contains an amount of long-lived radiation equivalent to that released by 1000 Hiroshima bombs! Many of these radioactive elements will continue to emit radiation for thousands of

years. The impact of this radiation on the human body is deathly: it causes cancer, infertility, premature aging, kidney problems, and several other diseases, and also mutates the reproductive genes – causing all kinds of diseases and birth deformities in future generations.

Even if nuclear reactors operate normally, their environmental costs are terrible. People living near the reactors are inevitably exposed to radiation leakages: the diabolical elements created in the fission reaction leak out of the reactor into the environment through a number of ways. The consequence: they will continue to suffer from cancer and other deathly diseases and children will continue to be born with mental and physical deformities for thousands of years!

An even more monstrous problem is the problem of waste disposal. Each 1000 MW nuclear power plant generates 30 tons of radioactive waste annually. This waste contains elements like Plutonium and Technetium, and is intensely radioactive and remains so for more than 2 lakh years! There is no safe way of storing these deadly wastes; they are generally stored in temporary storage sites near the reactors. Everywhere, the waste is leaking, leaching, seeping through the soil into aquifers, rivers and seas, to ultimately enter the bodies of plants, fish, animals and humans. Its consequences are going to be with us for the rest of time!

Nuclear Energy is Accident-prone

Finally, because of the complex nature of nuclear technology, nuclear reactors are inherently prone to accidents. No amount of safety devices can prevent them. This was eloquently brought out in a

report by some of the world's most distinguished scientists presented to the European Parliament in 2007 which examined the safety records of nuclear plants in several countries. They came to the stunning conclusion that “since Chernobyl, catastrophe has, on several occasions, only narrowly been avoided.” In other words, sooner or later, a catastrophic nuclear accident was bound to happen, and it happened in Fukushima. An accident needs a reason; the earthquake and tsunami happened to be it. Even after Fukushima, if we still do pay heed and do not shut down each and every nuclear reactor all over the world, sooner or later, another catastrophic accident is bound to happen again, in one of the world's 430 operating reactors.

Sun Setting on Nuclear Energy Globally

Because of these terrible effects, most countries around the world have stopped building nuclear plants. The US has not ordered a new plant for nearly 40 years now, since October 1973, and Canada since 1978. A majority of countries of Western Europe have banned nuclear power plants. After Fukushima, countries which had nuclear plants, like Germany and Switzerland, have decided to close down their existing nuclear reactors too.

Three months after the Fukushima accident, on July 13, the Japanese Prime Minister, in a television address to the nation, stated that Japan should learn from the disaster and called for a complete phase-out of nuclear power. He stated: “Through my experience of the March 11 accident, I came to realise the risk of nuclear energy is too high. It involves technology that cannot be controlled according to

our conventional concept of safety.”

But Not in India!

The huge scale of the Fukushima disaster has however left the Indian government and nuclear establishment unfazed. It is determined to implement its ambitious plans for a quantum jump in nuclear power generation, from 4780 MW at present to 63,000 MW by 2032. Two Russian-built 1000 MW reactors are nearing completion in Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu; a powerful people's movement has prevented them from getting commissioned. At Jaitapur, in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra, the government is proposing to import six giant-sized, 1650 MW, reactors from France. It is also planning to set up massive nuclear power parks in the coastal areas of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. Six to eight reactors, of 1000-1650 MW, will be installed at each nuclear park.

To prove the safety of India's nuclear program despite the massive tragedy in Japan which has brought out in grim detail the dangers of nuclear energy, India's nucleophiles are making the most outrageous statements. For instance, they are claiming that India's reactors are of superior design and our safety record is better than Japan's! The truth is that India's Department of Atomic Energy and its subsidiary, the Nuclear Power Corporation of India, are notoriously inefficient and completely untrustworthy. They have built and operated their much smaller 220 MW reactors so carelessly that nuclear experts worldwide have labelled them the “least efficient” and the “most dangerous in the world”. There have been hundreds of accidents at India's reactors! Some of these, like the accident at Narora in UP in 1993,

very nearly led to a Chernobyl-like meltdown. And now we are entrusting these organisations with the responsibility of supervising the construction and subsequently of operating imported reactors five to seven times bigger than the reactors presently installed in the country!

To make matters worse, bowing to pressure from its foreign nuclear plant suppliers, the Government of India has passed a Nuclear Liability Law, indemnifying foreign equipment suppliers of all liabilities in case of an accident in a reactor supplied by them!! If indeed nuclear energy is as safe as the government and the nuclear industry are claiming it to be, why this law?

Combine all this, and it is obvious that we are heading for a huge catastrophe. If an accident were to happen at Madban, in the minimum, entire Western Maharashtra, including Pune, would be contaminated; and if it happens at Kudankulam, Kerala and Tamil Nadu would have to be evacuated! Are we going to allow this?

Alternative Solution to Energy Crisis

As the people of Japan are now learning through bitter experience, how can a technology which can be so devastating be called sustainable? The genuinely safe, and actually the only environmentally sustainable solution, to the country's energy crisis and our future growth needs is: maximizing energy efficiency and using renewable energy sources. Through measures such as increasing generation, transmission and end-use efficiency, it is possible to reduce electricity demand by a whopping 30-40 percent! That would not only wipe out the entire power sector deficit in the country which is less

than 20 percent, there would be no need to build new power plants for the next few years!! But just taking efficiency improvement measures would not be enough, as efficiency improvement often leads to an increase in demand. Therefore, along with improving efficiency, it would also be necessary to curb demand by imposing curbs on luxurious and wasteful consumption of electricity. In that case, our future growth needs can easily be met from renewable energy sources. Even the government admits their potential to be: Wind Energy - 48,500 MW; Small Hydro Power - 15,000 MW; Biomass Energy - 21,000 MW; and at least 50,000 MW from Solar Energy. The actual potential is much, much more. Furthermore, while nuclear electricity costs are rising, renewable energy costs are rapidly falling: wind energy is already cheaper than conventional electricity; solar photovoltaic energy costs are rapidly coming down, are already much cheaper than nuclear electricity, and are expected to become cheaper than grid electricity costs by 2015-20. Even if construction begins now, it would take at least 10 years to build a nuclear power plant. By then, it would have become unviable.

The Real Reason for India's Nuclear Push

Why then are India's rulers indulging in this madness of constructing nuclear power plants? One important reason: to provide foreign corporations and big Indian corporations another opportunity to make huge profits. Ever since 1991, when the government began the globalisation of India, successive governments have been running the Indian economy solely for maximising the profits of giant foreign and Indian business houses – through schemes like

SEZs, privatisation of public sector corporations and financial institutions at throwaway prices, allowing them to plunder mountains, forests and rivers for their immense mineral wealth displacing lakhs of people, allowing them to take over education, health and other essential services and mint super profits, and so on. With nuclear power on decline in the West, the global nuclear industry is looking to Asia, especially China and India, for markets. And so the Manmohan Singh government has decided to promote nuclear energy in India. This is expected to provide foreign nuclear corporations and their Indian collaborators a \$150 billion business opportunity. India's rulers have sold their souls to the devil for a price that would have shamed Faust!

Friends,

At each and every place in the country where the government is proposing to set up nuclear plants – Kudankulam in south Tamil Nadu, Jaitapur in the Konkan region of Maharashtra, Gorakhpur in Haryana, Chutka in Madhya Pradesh, Kovvada in Andhra Pradesh and Mithivirdi in Gujarat – people are waging determined struggles. These peoples' struggles are not for getting a better compensation package from the government. The people of these regions are actually fighting for all of us, for the people of the entire country. They are demanding that the nuclear plants be scrapped. They realise that if the government of India continues with its diabolical nuclear program, sooner or later, a major nuclear accident is bound to take place in one of our nuclear reactors. And if that happens, its costs are going to be so huge that it will destroy India.

(Continued from Page 15)

Letter to the Editor

In response to Shri Kochar and Shri Kapoor

To my article 'Gandhi and Socialism' R.J.Kochar and Mastram Kapoor have reacted in Janata 30.10.2011 and 26.2.2012 and 1.1.2012. They have raised several issues not concerning Gandhi or Socialism but about Lohia. Shri Kochar says that I have deliberately omitted to consider Lohia's views on Gandhi. I did not refer to Lohia's views on, or his relations with, Gandhi or his ideological responses to Gandhism because I consider Lohia as an anarchist of Bakunin variety and hence not to be considered along with other democratic socialists. Though Shri Kochar and Shri Kapoor need not subscribe to my view, they have succeeded in dragging the discussion to Lohia rather than to Gandhi and Socialism. Their main concern appears to be to bring in Lohia rather than reflect on the relations between Gandhi and Socialism. Shri Kochar raised the issue of Lohia's doctorate and Shri Kapoor has raised the issue of 'rankle harboured by many PSPites against Lohia'.

Shri Kochar's argument is that I am raising the issue long after Lohia's death whereas he could have answered it when he was alive. He says that I am 'condemning' a dead person. I have not accused Lohia of any misdeed that Lohia could have replied if alive. Is trying to state a fact that Lohia had not been conferred the doctorate 'condemning' him? Only 'blind worshippers' of Lohia, can think like this. I have only 'wondered why he did not mention to Gandhi that he was not conferred Doctorate? Why he did not refute when he was introduced to the American people

as having served Gandhi as his private secretary?' Does some one's death preclude people from even wondering why the dead person behaved in a way he did? Lohia himself raised the issue of Nehru's grandfather being a Chaprasi long after the chaprasi's death. Lohia raised the issue to ridicule Nehru whereas I am only trying to find out the truth. Madhu Limaye called Lohia a 'gadfly' in an interview on 5 June, 1984, published in the book '50 years of Socialist movement in India' long after Lohia was not there defend himself. If saying that Lohia was not conferred doctorate makes me a 'Lohia hater' a la Kochar, what about some one who called him a gadfly? At least I have not called Lohia names. And then Lohia himself had told the party workers in the camp at Nagarjunsagar held in 1962 that 'the correct understanding of history decides how we behave in the present and how we should behave in future'.

About the website of the Humbolt University I find three internal reasons to doubt its veracity. Hitler was not in power when Lohia went to Germany as the website would like us to believe. Lohia went to Germany some time in October 1929 and Hitler was appointed Chancellor only on 30 January 1933 just a month or two before Lohia returned to India. Secondly if the website says that Lohia's thesis was 'Salt Satyagraha in India', at least I wonder why Lohia had to go to Germany to do 'research' on something that was 'happening' in India. The curtain raiser on 'The Salt Satyagraha' happened on 12th

March 1930 when Gandhi started his Dandi March and ended on 5th March 1931 with the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Thirdly doctorates are given for thesis and not in subjects. According to the website Lohia was given doctorate in Economics and Political Science. I feel that at least a university cannot commit this kind of a mistake. Anyway, one is free to 'believe', but I would rather 'doubt'.

My doubts were proved right when I visited the website. Shri Kochar quotes 'the very authentic' writing on the wall of the website of Humboldt University (Universitat Zu Berlin) as the 'proof' of Lohia's doctorate. The search for the 'search team' which prepared the 'wall' does not yield any results but if one goes through the website, one would know that Professors Dr. Yogendra Yadav and Dr. Anand Kumar of the Lohia Committee in India visited the Humbolt University on 28th June 2010 in connection with the Lohia Centenary and the 'wall' was hoisted on 26th of July 2010. Ms. Joachim's article appeared in the Economic and Political Weekly of 2nd October 2011. This is very interesting logic. Lohia followers feed wrong information and then flaunt it as 'authentic' information.

To reinforce my argument, Ms. Joachim who wrote the article in the Economic and Political Weekly wrote to me as follows:

Dear Bapu Heddurshetti,

Yes, there is such a text on a Humboldt university website. I do not know who authored/authorized it. I have stated in my article (see

EPW vol XLV, No 40, October 2, 2010) on the basis of the available sources: 1. Lohia stayed in Germany from autumn 1929 to February/March 1933. Hitler came to power only in 1933. 2. His subject was not Salt Satyagraha, but the title of his dissertation was "Salt Taxation in India". 3. His supervisor was Prof. Hermann Schumacher, not Sombart with whom however Lohia interacted.

I have no objection whatsoever if anybody wants to refer to Lohia as Dr. Lohia even though he was not conferred the doctorate. My point is that academic propriety requires that they should not be. What bothers me is that a person like Lohia did not find it appropriate to inform a person like Gandhi about it. Asoka Mehta was conferred Doctor of Laws and Doctor of Literature degrees, but the prefix was never used either by Asoka Mehta or any one else, because the academic propriety required that since the degrees were conferred honoris causa, the degrees should not be flaunted. But even then if anyone wants to refer to Lohia as Dr. Lohia it is upto them. Shri Kapoor says that Lohia never used the prefix 'Dr.' with his name. But Lohia wrote forewords to books which referred to him as Dr. Lohia.

The dogged insistence on part of Lohia followers to still use the prefix only reminds one of Dr. Goebbels of the Third Reich who said that if a lie is repeated thousand times people tend to believe it to be true, and in this case there are people who would try not just to believe it to be true but to even prove it to be true.

In his second response, Shri Kochar has waxed eloquent about 'relevance' of Lohia, whereas I had not said anything about his

'irrelevance'. Shri Kochar adds a misinformation. He says that Nath Pai professed a view that 'Parliament was superior to Supreme Court'. I humbly request Shri Kochar to read Nath Pais's speech in Parliament, a gist of which is published in Janata of 8th December 1968 in which Nath Pai said that people are sovereign. I quote: "The Supreme Court has introduced an amendment of the constitution. The Constitution, after the Judgment in Golak Nath's case is a different constitution. What I am trying to do by my amendment is to restore to the people of India the Constitution, the sovereignty, which belonged to them before the Supreme Court took it away, by a slender majority of six to five." In our anxiety to say that our leader was vindicated let us not misinform about other leaders.

Shri Kochar says that I have not critically analysed Lohia's principles and philosophy and that such exercise requires 'intellectual caliber and ability'. I do not claim to have any 'intellectual caliber and ability' and I also do not claim to have read and understood Lohia thoroughly. However, I would like to assure Shri Kochar that I am certainly not one of those 'blind critics who are too prejudiced and self assured to even read what Lohia had to say about some of the big questions of our time'. I have recently published a book in Kannada language on Lohia's life and ideas wherein I have examined his theories on 'non'congressism', 'caste', 'small unit technology' his attitude towards Gandhi and Gandhism, his 'contribution to foreign policy' etc., with more than 600 references in a book of 200 pages with a bibliography running to 59 books. My article on 'Lohia, Gandhi and Gandhism' in English

has been lost in the mire of day dreamers and Lohia worshippers, but has been retrieved at least in Kannada. If trying to find out the truth is 'mean sense of hatred', so be it.

Shri Kochar says that Lohia 'roared in the Parliament in 1963 that poverty was stalking the country and that the income of 27 crore people was less than 3 annas a day'. Mahatma Gandhi had written on 2nd March 1930 to the then Viceroy that his income was "21,000 rupees (about Pounds 1,750/-) per month, besides many other indirect additions. You are getting over 700 rupees a day against India's average income of less than two annas (two pence) per day. Thus you are getting much over five thousand times India's average income. The British Prime Minister is getting only ninety times Britain's average income. On bended knee, I ask you to ponder over this phenomenon". Asoka Mehta quotes philosopher George Santayana to say that "he who is ignorant of history of philosophy is 'doomed' to repeat it". The quotation can be quoted even omitting the word 'philosophy'.

Shri Kapoor, far from commenting on my article on Gandhi and Socialism, has commented on my response to Shri Kochar. He refers to 'rankle harboured by many PSPites' about Lohia. Madhu Limaye called Lohia a 'gadfly'. Did he also have 'rankle' about Lohia and was he also a PSPite? About Lohia, JP had said that instead of attacking ideas Lohia attacked persons. Lohia followers are also doing the same by saying that I am a PSPite. I only wish that issues raised by me are discussed instead of trying to find out my ancestry like Lohia did of Nehru.

The unpleasant words for Nehru, JP etc., were used by Lohia not in informal chats, as Shri Kapoor would like us to believe, but in writing and in print. Shri Kapoor who has edited the collected works of Lohia should know this. I certainly do not know when and where Nehru, JP and Kripalani used foul language against Lohia? I certainly would like to know and will be thankful if Mastram Kapoor can give me the references so that I can condemn them also. And even if they did, it does not justify use of foul language by Lohia to others. It is in this context only that one of Lohia's followers Kishen Patnayak says that there is no doubt that the way

Lohia ridiculed his opponents was certainly not Gandhian.

Shri Kapoor says 'if his friends, colleagues and admirers used the prefix, which he well-deserved, why should any gentleman object?' Well, can 'friends, colleagues and admirers' think that a person deserves to be the President of India, or the Chief Justice of India, can he be so addressed and should no 'gentleman' object? At least I find it a strange logic.

However, both are silent on Lohia's claim, albeit indirect, that he was 'private secretary' to Gandhi and on Lohia's claim that Marx

did not know anything about the caste system in India and that Marx advocated 'equality of opportunity'. I hope I need not add that Lohia was 'never' the 'private secretary' to Gandhi and that Marx not only wrote about caste system in India but also did not, I repeat, did not, advocate equality of opportunity.

Facts sometimes are stranger than fiction and history is many times very inconvenient and bitter. Instead of trying to distort history to suit our fancies and live in a world of denial, we should have the honesty and courage to accept it, opt for course correction and look and move forward.

– **Bapu Heddurshetti.**

With this letter to the editor by Bapu Heddurshetti, Janata will rest the controversy: whether Rammanohar Lohia was awarded a doctorate or not. For Janata he will remain a doctor not because it does not value scholarship of those researchers who are looking for proof of his being awarded doctorate but because the country, socialists included, called him doctor and also because his contribution to socialist movement does not diminish in the absence of doctorate. Janata has called him doctor and will continue to do so.

– **Editor**

People's Participation and Human Development: Challenges of Reconstructing Indian Polity - II

Ravi Kiran Jain

Political corruption showed its ugliest head, with the re-emergence of Indira Gandhi, when on 3rd January, 1980 Indira Gandhi's Congress-I defeated the Janata Party in the election. During January 1980, Justice Bhagwati wrote a "Dear Indiraji" letter to the Prime Minister congratulating her on her re-election and praised her "iron will" uncanny inside and dynamic vision, great administrative capacity and...heart which is identified with the misery of the poor and the weak." The Justice continued that "the judicial system in our

country is in a state of utter collapseWe should have a fresh and uninhibited look at it and consider what structural and jurisdictional changes are necessary..."

Given Smt. Gandhi's past policies towards judiciary, it was a small wonder that after the re-emergence of Indira Gandhi in 1980, the train of events began with the Government intending to appoint Chief Justices of High Courts from outside their jurisdiction. This sequence of events led to the filing of writ petition by S.P.Gupta and many others. The

Constitution Bench was presided over by Justice Bhagwati. The majority judgment in this case gave way to the Executive to appoint judges of its choice as it was held therein that in matters of appointment of judges executive had supremacy and not the judiciary. The unaccomplished task of having "committed judges" during 1971-77 was accomplished by Indira Gandhi with the help of this judgment. The judgment in S.P.Gupta was delivered on 30/12/1981. For almost 12 years

the judges were appointed on the basis of their selection by the Executive. The institutional decay of the Higher Judiciary became complete. Collegium system for appointment of judges came into being by a judgment of Supreme Court in 1998. After this judgment the judges appointed in various High Courts during the period the Executive had the supremacy to appoint them (i.e between 30.12.81 and 6.10.93) became senior judges in the Supreme Court and started becoming Judges of the collegiums of the Supreme Court and of various High Courts, who had a different mind-set being chosen during the period of the supremacy of the executive. Now appointments are being made on the recommendation of these collegiums. The net result of this is judicial corruption.

The last day of October 1984, saw the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the first major political killing since that of Mahatma Gandhi. Rajiv Gandhi was an outsider in politics which was to his advantage, as he was not having any controversies and had the reputation of a nice gentleman. He was labeled as "Mr. Clean". Rajiv Gandhi came to power with a massive mandate in the polls held after his mother's death. There were however allegations of corruption in the Government during his regime. A challenge came to him from his erstwhile cabinet colleague V. P. Singh. As Finance Minister, Singh had conducted a series of raids on industrial houses accused of tax evasion. He was then shifted to Defence portfolio, and later dropped from the Cabinet altogether. Not long afterwards a storm broke out over revelations that commission had been paid to middleman in a deal

involving the sale of the Swedish Bofors gun to the Indian Army.

Former President of India Sri Venkataraman, in his book "My Presidential Yrars" made very significant and revealing observations about political corruption, as follows:

"J.R.D. Tata made a courtesy call on me. We had known each other from the days when I was in the Planning Commission and had developed a mutual regard for each other. Commenting on Rajiv's statement on Bofors in Parliament, Tata said that though it was quite possible that neither Rajiv nor members of his family had received any consideration in the gun and other defence deals, it would be difficult to deny the receipt of commissions by the Congress Party. He felt that since 1980 industrialists had not been approached for political contributions and that the general feeling among them was that the party was financed by commissions on deals."

Dr. Verghese Kurian, with customary candour, says about bureaucratic governance in "I Too Had a Dream":

"Our bureaucracy today is too bloated and therefore it is burdensome. For example, 95 per cent of the agriculture budget goes into paying staff's salaries and I would not be surprised if the remaining 5 per cent goes towards the maintenance of its jeeps. Where is the planning in that? As an interested and concerned citizen who has witnessed our planning process for the last five decades, I can see why the fruits of development today are not commensurate with the money spent.

In many ways, Rajiv Gandhi's famous statement, about only fifteen paise reaching the bottom when hundred paise are released from the top, said it all. The solution can only lie in creating democratic structures which people themselves command, instead of the bureaucracy. The place for the IAS officer is in the secretariat and not in the field. The IAS officer is basically an aya-ram gaya-ram. He is transferred at regular intervals and it is almost impossible for him to show commitment when he knows he is going to be transferred in a short span of time. I have never understood how, for instance, the Agriculture Secretary can be a person who does not know agriculture. Somebody who passed some competitive exam some thirty-five years ago, is today suddenly placed in this post, when until yesterday he was, perhaps, the Law Secretary, and the day before that he was the Defense Secretary. What a strange system this is of administering the country. I am convinced that the IAS, in its present form, will have to be abolished sooner or later. There is no other solution.

If we depend - as we have too long depended upon - on bureaucrats and politicians and not our people to deliver the goods, then there is very little that we will achieve as a nation. The bureaucrats and politicians will only become stronger."

In 1991 when Chandrashekhar became Prime Minister he found our coffers empty. This was obviously the result of the corruption resulting from the centralized system of governance through bureaucrats. Dr. Manmohan Singh became Finance Minister in Narsimha Rao government in the same year and initiated the process of so-called reforms and we entered into the trap of IMF and the World

Bank. Various governments since 1991 are committing a breach of faith by violating fundamental norms and principles on which the citizens of this country were to secure for themselves social, economic and political justice. Now the World Bank gives periodical reports. It examines our “economic performance”. Our government provides to the World Bank a free access to all its institutions and official records. The World Bank declared that it conducted studies “as per of the continuing analysis by the Bank of the economic and related conditions of our country.” (A World Bank Country Study: India Sustaining Rapid Economic Growth, July, 1997) In its so-called report “India: Reducing Poverty Accelerating Development-A World Bank Country Study” (Oxford University Press, 2000), the World Bank has suggested ways to meet ‘long-term challenges of poverty-reduction and development. It is not merely a suggestion. It is a document of our economic slavery.

One may feel aghast by a careful perusal of this report which is revealing of the fact that all successive governments have absolutely surrendered our country's development agenda in the hands of the World Bank. It is crystal clear by this report that now it is under the World Bank's dictates that the issues of basic education, health, agriculture, industry, infrastructure, etc., are taken up. This report says that it was discussed with the Government of India on August 10, 1999. It runs into 260 pages and is very elaborate. It is not possible to believe that such a bulky document containing so many aspects could have been discussed only in a day. It is not mentioned in the so-called report as to who was representing

the Government of India in this discussion. May be that it was only some bureaucrat. It is not merely a report, but a long-term agenda claiming to give guidelines for the governance of “We, the people of India”, and guidelines as how to reduce our poverty, improve our health, impart education to the poor, how to develop infrastructure. Now the “governance” is being done in accordance with the “guidelines” of the World Bank, and not as per the Directive Principles, contained in Part IV, which according to the Constitution, are fundamental in ‘governance’ of the country. The striking characteristics of these “guidelines” is that issues that were hitherto in the domain of political system (either at the central or state level), including core governance, public sector management, transparency, accountability and so on moved to the domain of the World Bank agenda and thereby surrendering our political and economic sovereignty in the hands of the World Bank..

We often come across in news reports that some World Bank team is coming to meet the Chief Minister of some state or the other, and that team would present “Development Challenges’ faced by some state governments or the other so that they seek financial assistance (read, loan) from the World Bank in the areas of power, roads, water supply, sanitation, waste resource management, livelihood project and so on, and the assistance offered is of hundreds of millions in one go.

Soon after Dr. Manmohan Singh became the Prime Minister, the World Bank President, James D. Wolfenshon made a visit to India (November 17-18, 2004) and had the audacity to claim that “When

I think of India, I also see a very critical role for this country in a very much more immediate fight – the global fight against poverty. The simple fact is that the world cannot win this fight if India does not win it.” He further observed, “that is not all, India's huge number of illiterate people, children out of school, people suffering from communicable diseases, infant and maternal deaths, all amount to massive proportions of the problems, its antiquated infrastructure, the lack of livelihood opportunities in rural areas, improving health and education outcomes, and ensuring public services, like electricity, water, sanitation and others are efficiently delivered, especially to poor people.”

Now with a nexus between the political leadership and the bureaucracy in the country, the World Bank-IMF-WTO are killing the livelihood and traditional methods of production and cottage industry as well as environment itself. This process is creating unemployment, recession, scarcity of raw materials and haphazard industrial growth which is making the country economically bankrupt. It is bringing new opportunities to expand the market and expand the technology “through management expertise from above” which is bringing undesired results and also making skilled and unskilled workers jobless.

All this is also giving rise to a nexus between criminals, unscrupulous politicians and bureaucrats. With bureaucrats implementing the development plans suggested by the World Bank and corruption eating away a big part of development funds, thousands of crores of rupees have gone to

private hands. While corruption and criminalization sapped the soul out of the ideal of people-oriented democratic governance, centralization of political authority leads to an unaccountable bureaucratization of governance. The result is that the common man is wholly marginalized.

Constitution 73rd Amendment Act came into force on 24.4.1993 and the 74th Amendment Act on 1.6.1993. In the same year the then Prime Minister P.V. Narsimha Rao announced a scheme on December 23rd, 1993 which is known as Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS). The scheme enables MPs to identify works based on "locally felt needs in their constituencies". For this task the M.P.s can suggest to District Collectors to allocate funds to the tune of Rs. 2 crores per year (initial amount of Rs. 5 lacs was raised to Rs. 1 crore in 1994 and to Rs. 2 crores in December, 1998) for various projects. The introduction of this scheme has exposed the M.P.s to various temptations. It has the potentialities to breed corruption and make it institutionalized. It has created a vested interest in the political class to undermine the constitutional scheme contained in Part-IX and IX-A. The proposal of the then Prime Minister P.V. Narsimha Rao came wrapped in troubles with Somnath Chatterjee, the then leader of the C.P.M. in the Lok Sabha, rejecting it outright saying, "In principle we do not accept the proposal. We have the District Planning Commission in which M.P.s, M.L.A.s and panchayats are represented. The planning and priorities are decided there. This (the proposal) will only mean disturbing the priority which is decided by the District Planning Board".

Besides encouraging the institution of corruption in allocating an amount of Rs. 2 Crores each at a flat rate to every Member of Parliament whether he is elected from a posh urban area or a backward rural area, it causes lot of confusion in the minds of the people about their role in the development through the Local Self Government. In fact this amount should be sent by Union of India

straight to the Panchayats without any bureaucratic interference. The budget allocation to the Ministry of Rural Development is next only to those made to Defence. The ministry implements program annually for poverty alleviation and development of infrastructure, habitats and land resources in the rural areas to the tune of more than Rs.20000 crores.

(To Be Concluded)

(Continued from Page 9)

We must support these struggles. Young and old, students and teachers, working people, all of us must join these struggles and demand of the Government of India:

1. Scrap the Kudankulam and Jaitapur nuclear power projects!

Scrap all new nuclear power plants!!

2. Phase out all existing nuclear plants at the earliest.

3. Invest massively in energy saving and development of renewable technologies!

—Lokayat, Pune

FORM VI (See Rule 8)

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | Place of publication: Mumbai | |
| 2. | Periodicity of publication: Weekly | |
| 3. | Printer's name: G. G. Parikh | |
| | Whether citizen of India: | Yes |
| | Address: | D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007. |
| 4. | Publisher's name: G. G. Parikh | |
| | Whether citizen of India: | Yes |
| | Address: | As above |
| 5. | Editor's name: G. G. Parikh | |
| | Whether citizen of India: | Yes |
| | Address: | As above |
| 6. | Name and address of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one percent of the total capital | Janata Trust |
| | Address: | As above |

I, G. G. Parikh, hereby declare that the particulars given are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated: March 11, 2012

(G. G. Parikh)

Signature of Publisher



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 67 No. 8

March 18, 2012

Post-poll Scenario

S.Viswam

Is Congress BJP's carbon copy?

Kuldip Nayar

EU Crisis and India

D.K. Giri

**Ambedkar and Lohia:
a dialogue on caste**

Yogendra Yadav

**People's Participation and
Human Development:
Challenges of Reconstructing
Indian Polity - III**

Ravi Kiran Jain

Concern for Working Children

Kerala Socialist Conference

Editor :

G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

The Indian political class has cheerfully embraced the concept of dynastic politics, but there was a time when most parties and leaders were part of the large chorus condemning the Congress for encouraging dynastic politics and promotion of sycophantic nepotism. Now that the concept of keeping the spoils of politics and office within the family is no longer anathema, no voice of protest is raised against the phenomenon. Thus, no one is willing to fault the trend, now almost a pattern, of son succeeding father and nephew succeeding uncle. So, it is more or less a sure sign of the times that the well-played-out post-poll drama in Uttar Pradesh is being taken in its stride by both the political class and the public at large. We must use the occasion to record the fact that "sonshines" are no longer to be treated as unusual phenomena or to be deplored as a politically unhealthy and hence unacceptable. Prakash Singh Badal, M.Karunanidhi, Biju Patnaik, Sheikh Abdullah and Farooq Abdullah are all expert practitioners of the art of passing on their batons to their sons and keeping well within the examples set by Nehru, Indira Gandhi and now Sonia Gandhi whose son Rahul waits in the wings to don the prime ministerial mantle.

In that spirit we need to welcome the induction of Akhilesh Yadav as Uttar Pradesh's youngest chief minister at 38 and as a choice hailed within the state and outside as the best thing that could have happened to a state around which national politics has been revolving ever since India became a free, sovereign, democratic republic. That said, it needs to be added that Akhilesh's induction as the head of the new single-party government is being looked upon as the new hope of a new pattern of governance marking a total departure from the type witnessed during Akhilesh's father Mulayam Singh's dispensations. The new CM has said that lawlessness in UP will be a thing of the past, that he will not pursue vendetta politics and that the new government will uphold fairness and decency in public life. The people will hold him up to his promises.

Two thoughts have been floating in the air after the detailed results of the assembly polls were published. Both are highly speculative, and almost border on the saying that "wish is often the father to the thought". The first has dwelt on the weakening of the UPA II to the extent that a mid-term poll is unavoidable and inevitable. Sushma Swaraj did some

loud thinking on the idea and many others followed suit. So persistent did the notion of the imminence of a snap poll take wings that Prime Minister had to reassure first himself, then his party, and then the public that the UPA coalition had the “necessary numbers” to survive even though some of the coalition partners are giving increasing signs of undependability. We can dismiss the idea of a mid-term poll straightaway. No party wants it, least of all the Trinamool Congress which is placing all the roadblocks in the UPA way. Even if Trinamool deserts the coalition, the government will survive since all the other parties including the BJP (not performed any better than the Congress), the BSP, the SP and importantly the left groups, will not ditch the UPA, not because they have any special love for the Congress but because they are not themselves ready for polls - yet.

The second idea floating about is the possibility, nay even high probability of a third front emerging out of the revival of the anti-Congressism plank. In Indian politics, the Third Front concept is the most whipped horse. All non-Congress non-BJP parties want it but none of them will work for it or stay committed to the notion. Third Fronts have been formed and dissolved numerous times. If there is a talk again, it is because the estrangement of the Trinamool and the DMK-AIDMK from the ruling coalition, and Trinamool's repeated challenges to the Centre have raised the impression that an anti-Congress front of non-BJP parties is coming up on the sidelines. Good luck to it if it does so. We will wait till the eggs are hatched.

Between the lines

Is Congress BJP's carbon copy?

Kuldip Nayar

Numbers are important in a parliamentary system and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's assertion that he has them should be assuring to the ruling Congress. After its debacle in state elections of UP and Punjab, the party's anxiety is understandable.

Yet the annoyance by West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee can reduce the numbers. Her Trinamool Congress party has 19 members in the Lok Sabha. She has already given a notice for amendment in the Presidential address which mentioned the creation of a National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC). Supporting her are also six non-BJP state chief ministers.

If the Samajwadi Party's Mulayam Singh, lionized by the victory in UP, were to align with the Trinamool Congress with his 22 members, Manmohan Singh's majority can come tumbling down, reducing him to a minority in a house of 543. The Dravid Munnetra Kazhagam with 18 members can add to Manmohan Singh's troubles because the party has given a notice to express its annoyance over the plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Even then the numbers meet the needs of the constitution, not that of governance. Except for the first few years, the Manmohan Singh government has been lousy in its performance. Price rise has been constant and the decline in growth relentless. The same Manmohan

Singh, who introduced economic reforms with Victor Hugo's words that the time for idea (of India) has come and none can stop it, is now bereft of ideas. He is listless and his government gives the impression as if it has outlived its stay.

If one were to count the scams, they would beat hollow all the governments since independence. So much money, trillions of rupees, have lined pockets of ministers, bureaucrats and outsiders - both Indian and foreign. Never before has the public exchequer been looted so openly and so unashamedly.

But for some enterprising media hands and activists, the scandals would not have come to light. And the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the kingpin, would have gone on keeping Manmohan Singh in the dark if the Supreme Court had not pointed out that officers and advisers at the PMO were to blame. Strange, none has been punished, strengthening the belief that Dr Manmohan Singh knew all but stayed quiet because of political compulsions.

How these instances of corruption do square up with the numbers is the question. Even if the Congress had a majority on its own, its stock is so damaged that the party would need to overhaul itself and effect some miracles to come back into the people's reckoning.

The reason why the people voted for it in the past for decades

was the different image the Congress projected from its rival, the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). Whether it is competitive politics or the abandonment of values, the Congress looks a duplicate copy of the BJP. Both are corrupt and both are communal and casteists.

True, when Indira Gandhi ousted morality from politics in the seventies, the party lost the sense to differentiate between right and wrong, moral and immoral. Still there were times, even during Manmohan Singh's regime, when the hope of cleaner and nobler politics flickered. Why do the future of government and the Congress look so bleak now? Can the Congress turn back from the precipice?

In fact, the party can begin a new chapter if it were to introduce a bill in parliament to lay down that the political parties would accept money only through cheques and would get their accounts audited by the recognized chartered accountant firms. This step will help the reputation of the Congress soar high and remove the stigma that the suitcases full of currency go right up to the top in the party to finance elections. The BJP is no different but the responsibility of cleansing the system lies on the shoulders of those in power.

The Congress is, however, doing the opposite. With the help of the obedient Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) the scandals are minimized to favour the party which comes to support the Congress. More than that is the absence of remorse. The insensitive Congress continues to make mistakes. Take the case of reservations. During

EU Crisis and India

D.K. Giri

The European Union (EU) is by far the biggest regional integration in the contemporary politics. Founded in 1957, by six member countries, it was known as the European Economic Community. Now, it has 27 member countries with a single currency, Euro, and is known as European Union. So, 60 odd years ago what began as peace project between Germany and France after the Second World War, then a commercial and economic integration, and then a common market, has become a Political Union.

Both Union of India and European Union have a lot in common in terms of their political and social texture, although their evolution has had different trajectories. The European Union emerged since 1960, as an integrated unit of different member countries, whereas India became a republic in 1947 and started as Union of states the same year. But now, both have to maintain their unity, act and progress as a Union. Despite these similarities and India's historical contact with many member countries (not only with Britain) the relations between India and European Union have remained weak and asymmetrical. This was because there has been a mismatch between economics and politics in foreign policy approaches of Union of India as well as of European Union. While India's foreign policy, immediately after the Second World War, and during the Cold War was driven by security interests, EU's was predominantly by economic interest; India ignored her economic

interest as EU underplayed its political objectives. It is worth recalling what Nehru said about the European Community, "it is a capitalist club". At one point in 1980s, more than 60 percent of India's trade deficit was accounted for by the European Community. Yet, India did not have a solid policy towards European Community. In fact, EC affairs were put under the Ministry of Commerce, not even at the European Desk of the Ministry of External Affairs. I have referred, in greater detail, to issues and events involved, in my book "European Union and India", when India had a lukewarm attitude to the European Community - at a heavy cost. Likewise, European Community having less interest in Indian economy ignored India's strengths in running a multicultural democracy which now the European Union is trying to embrace. Contrary to EU's political objectives in international politics, it was heavily engaged economically with countries like China which denied political and civil freedoms to its people.

The Euro Crisis

European Union is caught in economic crisis as its member countries go bankrupt one after another. What is happening in Greece, which became a part of euro zone in 2001, is a case in point. Many would argue that it is the euro - the dream of many European politicians in the years following World War II which was established in Maastricht, the Netherlands by the European Union in 1992 - that is responsible for the crisis. It was stipulated

(Continued on Page 5)

that in order to join the currency member, states had to qualify by meeting the Treaty obligations in terms of budget deficits, inflation, interest rates and other monetary requirements. On 1st January, 1998 euro came into existence, and has had many twists and turns in its use by euro zone members. In April 2009 EU warned France, Spain, Ireland and Greece to reduce their budget deficits. In October, the same year, George Papandreou's socialist party won a snap poll in general elections and formed the government. In December, Greece admitted that its debts have reached 300 billion euros, the highest in any country in Europe in modern history. The debts of Greece reached 113 percent of its GDP, nearly double the euro zone limit of 60 percent. In January 2010, the EU Report found that the budget deficit of Greece in 2009 was 12.7 percent instead of 3.7 percent claimed by Greece. This was the four times of the maximum allowed by EU rules. EU became wary of the heavily indebted countries like Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain. Greece was asked to make heavy cuts in its spending and to introduce austerity measures. There were widespread strikes and protests. Then EU and IMF gave 22 billion euros to help Greece, but no loans. That was not enough. Again, the euro zone members gave 30 billion euros in emergency loans. Greece continued to suffer as euro began going down. Then, euro zone countries and IMF agreed on a 110 billion euro bailout package to rescue Greece. In November 2011, EU and IMF gave a bailout package of 85 billion euro to Ireland. In May, Portugal received a bailout package of 78 billion euro from EU and IMF. In July, the second bailout package of 109 billion euros was given to Greece as it was feared that Greece

will be the first country to leave euro zone. The crisis deepened for Greece. The Greek Finance Minister Evangelos Venizelos said in September last year, "my country has been blackmailed and humiliated and made a scapegoat for the EU's incompetence". The British foreign minister William Hague said "euro is in a burning building with no exits". In October, euro zone countries gave another bailout of 8 billion euro to Greece to save the country from default on its loan repayment. But the crisis continued making European Union, an unpopular topic for political discussion in many countries. For instance, France, which prided in being one of the founders of EU, eschews any discussion even in its presidential election campaign which is underway. Both the candidates, the incumbent President Nicholas Sarkozy, and his social democrat challenger Francois Hollande, avoid reference to euro zone crisis. But can EU be bypassed in France's foreign and economic policy?

European Union has been through several ups and downs in its evolution. Although its political integration has been unsteady and uneven, its economic management has been without much tension and disruption. Now the economic crisis seems to be the worst ever. This confirms the "mismatch theory" I mentioned earlier on. There are European specialists like Professor Juliet Lodge, who argued that political and economic integration have to be balanced. She once said "without the political union, the economic integration achieved so far will be diluted". More researched evidence is yet to come out to endorse this viewpoint, but if the Greek Finance Minister's statement and those of many others are any indication, the

crisis is the consequence of bad political management and lack of co-ordination amongst members.

Impact on India

The immediate impact on Indian economy will be marginal as Indian economy is largely domestic; its exposure is limited; to a large extent remains insulated from the global situation. A few exporting sectors will be hit by the crisis in Europe But this is a narrow perspective. India has complex economic relations with Europe. Recently, RBI said "the European crisis poses a major downside risk to the country's overall growth outlook and continuing uncertainty there will adversely affect India's growth through trade, finance and confidence channels". India has been impacted in the past by trade deficit with Europe, by a low priority given to India by Europe in economic terms, and India's own distant attitude towards Europe. A relation of interdependence was asked for by India, but Europe did not need India economically, it preferred China, while India did not need Europe politically, it preferred USSR and now USA. Both India and Europe ought to come closer in view of their similar political and social structures and similar international perspectives. But when economy, or self-interest dominates politics, or vice-versa, a balanced approach goes out of the window. Both Unions of India and Europe need to bring that balance in their policies, perceptions and preferences.

Past and Present

Although India was seen by countries like France as a former colony of Britain, EU-India relation was sort of commensurate with Britain's influence in EC. This historical perception was not a

good start. France brought in and defended the interest of her former colonies as Britain tried to do the same. India, in its external political approach, attempted to make a fresh beginning. It formed the Non-aligned movement (NAM) to stay clear of both the superpowers, it made contact with European Economic Community in 1962; in fact, it was the first developing country, to make the diplomatic contact with EC although Britain's membership of EC was vetoed twice by France, in 1963 and 1967. But Europe did not respond with similar warmth and an open mind. Only after Britain joined in 1973 a Commercial Cooperation Agreement was signed. It was replaced by a broader Commercial and Economic Cooperation Agreement in 1981. Again after about a decade, a much broader Partnership Agreement was signed between India and EU in 1994. So as the EU has evolved from commercial to economic to political in its own integration process, India-EU relation has reflected that evolution. In 2011, India became one of EU's strategic partners, and there has been several joint action plans in various fields. Currently, the negotiations are underway for a Free Trade Agreement. Apparently, the negotiations are getting stalled on non-trade issues. The negotiations which started in June 2007 are likely to be concluded early this year. The Agreement is expected to increase the trade between India and EU in goods, services and investment.

To conclude, India has drawn EU's attention only when it began to register a decent economic growth. Its arduously sustained political innovation and achievements did not attract EU's political leadership. This has been a mistake on the part of EU. The member countries have

led the world with rich political thoughts and strategies. But EU has been a trade and economic enterprise, overshadowed politically by former USSR and USA. EU has to rise politically, find political allies and assert its rightful place along

with others in international arena. It has to stop being seen as a satellite of America. In fact, EU's political positioning internally as well as in the world is the answer to its current economic crises.

(Continued from Page 3)

the recent election in UP, which has 19 per cent of the Muslim electorate, Law Minister Salman Khurshid introduced a sub-quota for Muslims from the overall 27 per cent reservations for Other Backward Classes. That the Muslims are 80 per cent backward is a fact which the Sachar Committee has brought out, but the Law Minister using this during the elections has muddied the waters of pluralism and given strength to the BJP's obsession with Hindutva.

The Congress is supposed to have secular credentials. Casting even a shadow on them is tantamount to betraying the ethos of independence - a secular society. But then the Congress of today is increasingly going away from those values and principles. Now its purpose is to concentrate power at the centre, unlike Mahatma Gandhi's precept of decentralization. Federalism is the core of the constitution and it is that very core which Home Minister P. Chidambaram and his ministry are trying to destroy. The proposed creation of NCTC is nothing but setting up machinery for snooping at what the states are doing in the subjects which the constitution has allotted them exclusively. The protest raised by some of the chief ministers should have put an end to this move. Yet the President's address mentions the proposal.

If nothing else, such acts of the Congress government may

revive the third or fourth front of non-Congress and non-BJP chief ministers. They are meeting on April 19 to chalk out their strategy on how to stop the centre from encroaching upon their authority. They have also been disturbed by home secretary's remark that the chief secretaries should not "act like stenographers" to the chief ministers. This may have made the non-BJP states all the more determined to have a loose kind of liaison so that they are not pushed by the centre any more. Were this to happen, the Prime Minister's claim that his government has the numbers does not mean much. His other allies may also leave him.

**Acharya Javadekar
A Satyagrahi Socialist**



Price: Rs. 20/-
Janata Trust

*D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir
Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W), Mumbai 400 007.*

Ambedkar and Lohia: a dialogue on caste

Yogendra Yadav

This article is about a dialogue that never took place. Bhimrao Ambedkar and Rammanohar Lohia were contemporaries in that their period of political activity overlapped by at least twenty years, between the mid-1930s and mid-1950s. Ambedkar, senior to Lohia by 20 years, did not have any compelling reasons to get to know Lohia, who was not much of a mass leader before the early 1950s. Nor did Lohia write anything significant on caste by that time. However, Lohia could not have been unaware of Ambedkar, his writings and his politics. Congress Socialist, the official organ of the CSP (Congress Socialist Party), had taken note of Ambedkar in the 1930s. In any case, someone like Lohia, who had a keen eye for subaltern perspectives, could not have missed the significance of Ambedkar. Yet, there is no evidence of his making any attempt to get in touch with Ambedkar before 1955.

Indeed, this is a dialogue that could not have taken place in their lifetime. Despite an underlying affinity, Ambedkar and Lohia stood on opposite sides of the political divide, before and after independence. The differences were unbridgeable before independence. Lohia belonged to the CSP which stood for radical nationalism and whose programme was to push the national movement away from any compromise with colonial power. If anything, Lohia was a shade more militant than his other colleagues on this point. Ambedkar, on the other hand, refused to recognize the national/ colonial division as the

principal faultline; he was willing to join hands with anyone, including the colonial power, for realizing his ultimate objective of social emancipation.

During the transfer of power, Lohia and his socialist colleagues stayed away from the Constituent Assembly and the provisional government; Ambedkar played a crucial role there. After independence, Lohia was opposed to all camps in world politics; Ambedkar would have liked India to be close to the Atlantic camp. Ambedkar drew upon the liberal tradition; Lohia on the socialist tradition. Add to this Lohia's ideological leaning towards and emotional bond with Gandhi and we have a good understanding of why a Lohia-Ambedkar dialogue did not take place.

Yet it almost did. Once Lohia split from the parent party, the then Praja Socialist Party, and decided to set up his own Socialist Party, he got in touch with Ambedkar. His letter of 10 December 1955 invites Ambedkar to write for Mankind, the journal Lohia had recently launched, to address a study camp and to attend the foundation conference of the Socialist Party. In that letter Lohia refers to the 'speeches I made about you in the parliamentary campaign in Madhya Pradesh.' The reference here is perhaps to the Lok Sabha by-election of 1954 when Ambedkar contested with support from the Socialist Party. We do not know the content of the speeches Lohia refers to, but the following sentence gives a sense of what Lohia must have

said: 'Even now I very much wish that sympathy should be joined to anger and that you become a leader not alone of the scheduled castes, but also of the Indian people.' (Caste System: 29)

Subsequent correspondence indicates that some of Lohia's colleagues met Ambedkar in September 1956 and started informal discussions about an alliance between the two parties. Ambedkar's letter of 24 September 1956 confirmed this and paved the way for formal consultations between the Socialist Party and the All India Scheduled Castes Federation. Ambedkar and Lohia tried to fix a meeting and missed each other due to scheduling problems. But the talks went on. Ambedkar passed away before the two of them could meet for a dialogue. Lohia recorded his regret in a letter (dated 1 July 1957) to his closest associate in the Socialist Party, Madhu Limaye:

'You can well understand that my sorrow at Dr Ambedkar's sudden death has been and is somewhat personal. It had always been my ambition to draw him into our fold, not only organizationally but also in full ideological sense, and that moment seemed to be approaching.

'...Dr Ambedkar was to me, a great man in Indian politics, and apart from Gandhiji, as great as the greatest of caste Hindus. This fact had always given me solace and confidence that the caste system of Hinduism could one day be destroyed.

‘I have always been trying to communicate to the Harijans in India, an idea which is basic with me. Dr Ambedkar and Sri Jagjivan Ram are the two types of modern Harijans in India. Dr Ambedkar was learned, a man of integrity, courage and independence; he could be shown to the outside world as a symbol of upright India, but he was bitter and exclusive. He refused to become a leader of non-Harijans. I can well understand the agony of the last 5000 years and their continuing impact on the Harijans. But that is precisely the point. Such a great Indian as Dr Ambedkar, I had hoped, would some day be able to rise above the situation, but death came early.’ (Caste System: 36-7)

Intellectual curiosity is a good reason to try and set up this dialogue that never took place. My principal consideration, however, is more practical. I have argued elsewhere that policies and politics of social justice in today’s India have reached a dead end, that the social justice movement needs a ‘second wind’, and that it can do so by going back to the thinkers and texts that provide much of the energy for the first wind of social justice in 20th century India. My question, then, is: Can Lohia and Ambedkar help us negotiate the dilemma of politics and policies of social justice in contemporary India?

This is what motivates me to set up a dialogue between Ambedkar and Lohia. I propose that we need to read Ambedkar and Lohia together (and, needless to say, much else as well) to gather resources to reinvent policies and politics of social justice. I hope to persuade that Ambedkar and Lohia shared much more than is known or acknowledged. It is important to recall this shared understanding

today. I suggest that we gain as much by focusing on conclusions as by noticing the method of arriving at their conclusions. If we learn from their method, we can form our own judgment by analyzing our own context and examining the evidence now available to us. Finally, I would argue that the significant and substantial disagreements between Ambedkar and Lohia are also a source of learning for us, provided we overcome the temptation to frame the difference from the vantage point of one or the other.

I suggest that the best way to set up a dialogue between Ambedkar and Lohia is to disregard history and treat them as non-contemporaries. Lohia should be read as a successor to Ambedkar, as someone who shared some fundamental convictions with Ambedkar and elaborated, extended and amended his formulations. This was not a smooth succession. Any elaboration of Ambedkar’s views on affirmative action, for instance, required acknowledging the various pitfalls in such a scheme and providing a sophisticated rationale for it. Extension too required some modifications: some of the suggestions implicit in Ambedkar’s views on caste, for example, needed to be brought to the surface. Such an extension required some degree of straightening out of the tensions within the Ambedkarite view of caste. Amendments were the most visible way of bringing about modifications, entailing a dialogue between radically different world views.

Viewed in this light, a dialogue between Ambedkar and Lohia does not remain a conversation between two thinkers or leaders. It turns into a dialogue between two phases of the social justice movement. Ambedkar

represented a moment of departure of the social justice movement: it required a painful rupture with Gandhi whose presence was both enabling and disabling for politics of social justice. This moment required a stylized picture of caste and sharp instruments of external critique, of legal/constitutional provisions and the language of western rationality. In many ways the politics of social justice in post-independence India has taken fifty years to catch up with Ambedkar’s theory. Lohia’s own political practice conformed to this script laid down by Ambedkar. At the same time, Lohia’s reflections on caste sketch a blueprint of the next stage of politics of social justice. This next stage could take the existence of this politics for granted, but needed new modalities to achieve a higher order of synthesis.

What unite Lohia and Ambedkar are four convictions that run through the social justice tradition in India. First, they both recognized that caste is an autonomous and significant dimension of inequality, injustice and oppression in Indian society; this recognition sets both of them apart from the Marxists and other socialists who either did not acknowledge caste or privileged class over all other dimensions of inequality. To be sure, neither Ambedkar nor Lohia viewed caste in exclusive terms, as both of them recognized gender and class based inequalities. Yet, they insisted upon its autonomy and in different ways prioritized caste based inequalities as the first call for a politics of social justice.

Second, they held the caste system responsible for a number of ills in Indian society, from economic stagnation to cultural degeneration and vulnerability to external powers. Thus, the caste system was a national

malaise, and not just a problem for its victims. The causal significance they attached to caste did signal some form of primacy to caste. Third, unlike the Hindu reformers, both of them were convinced that this system of inequality could not be repaired or reformed, that an end to caste based inequalities is possible only if the caste system is brought to an end. Both of them engaged in an open-ended search for ways of bringing about an end to the caste system.

Their preferred solutions differed, at least in emphasis. Ambedkar's conviction about conversion as a way out was not shared by Lohia. But even in this difference they shared something fundamental. Both of them believed that the struggle against the caste system would remain inadequate if it was confined to the material domain. The struggle against the caste system had equally to take place at the plane of ideas and address the spiritual quest of the oppressed. This recognition of the spiritual dimension of struggle against caste injustice constituted the fourth and final shared conviction between Ambedkar and Lohia.

These foundational similarities can, however, distract from the several ways in which Lohia extended Ambedkar. First, Lohia moved away from an essentialist view of caste as a static and uniform social division unique to Hindu society. His philosophy of history sought to historicize caste as one form of social stratification that may characterize any society in a phase of decline in its global position. This theoretical move enabled Lohia to combine a critique of the caste system as a sign of civilizational decline with an understanding of the internal logic of caste as a system

of social insurance. This, however, remained an abstract gesture, for Lohia did not provide many illustrations of caste outside India. Nor did he attempt a full account of the origins of caste in Indian history. Yet, this abstraction helped him recognize the intersection of caste, class, gender and language based inequalities. We get glimpses of how this frame could be used to study concrete situations, such as Lohia's analysis of the ruling class in India or his comparative political sociology of regimes in the Indian states.

Second, Lohia elaborates the suggestion of class and gender interacting with caste. Ambedkar's idea of caste being an 'enclosed class' and Lohia's suggestion of caste being an immobile class do not on the face of it appear very different. Ambedkar's suggestion about the caste system having come into existence to control women, too, has an echo in Lohia's formulation of gender based discrimination being the first and primary form of inequality. Lohia, however, extends the idea of intersection of caste with class and gender beyond the point of origin of the caste system. For him this intersectionality of caste, class and gender is a regular feature of social inequality. This intersectionality shapes Lohia's politics, for it characterizes his definition of the ruling class and the historic bloc of the oppressed that could be mobilized for social transformation.

For Lohia, the ruling class in India comprises the upper caste, well to do and English speaking persons, presumably men. The coalition of the oppressed that Lohia wanted to constitute included dalits, adivasis, backward castes, Muslims, women and, in some versions, the poor.

Thus, the challenge of annihilation of caste in Ambedkar becomes the challenge of destruction of castes and classes or the challenge to end the segregation of caste and sex in Lohia.

Third, Lohia carries forward Ambedkar's open-ended quest for ways to end the caste system. Like Ambedkar, Lohia did not put much store by inter-dining as a solution; both of them thought inter-caste marriage was a surer way in the long run. Lohia shared and in some ways extended Ambedkar's emphasis on the use of the modern state and democratic politics as an instrument to end the caste system. His reflections on affirmative action in jobs and assured political representation for the hitherto disadvantaged groups extended Ambedkar's arguments. Lohia was not as attentive as Ambedkar on the institutional mechanisms and their consequences. But he was acutely conscious of the possible side-effects and initial misuse of the policy of preferential treatment and offered a defence that anticipated and neutralized the critique of reservations in contemporary India.

An understanding of the foundational convictions that Ambedkar and Lohia shared and how Lohia extended some of Ambedkar's suggestions is not enough to set up a creative dialogue between the two. Ambedkar and Lohia diverged in two fundamental respects. These differences have substantial implications for the politics of social justice in contemporary India. Therefore, an attempt to learn from both of them requires that we confront these radical differences.

The first difference pertains to their political strategy. Ambedkar

followed a strategy of political segregation of dalits from the rest of Hindu society. Forging a distinct identity, recognition of differential interests and securing separate political representation were central to Ambedkar's political strategy for the destruction of the caste system. Specific actions like support for a separate electorate, system of reservations or conversion to Buddhism followed from this understanding. To be sure, there was an aggregative element to this segregative strategy. It meant bringing together thousands of castes and sub-castes which were then called 'untouchables'. The formation of the Labour Party and then the Republican Party of India also indicated a desire for joining other victims of injustice. But Ambedkar's principal strategy remained a politics of, for, and by the 'untouchables'.

This strategy has, of course, the merit of generating a sense of solidarity and political energy and has therefore been the unspoken ideology of dalit and backward caste politics in post-independence India. As a result, the segregative impulse of the politics of social justice has gained at the cost of an aggregative impulse. In many ways this was an extension of the division of political labour in colonial times: nationalist politics stood for aggregation while social justice movements were charged with segregation.

But with the politics of social justice gaining ground, the lines have got blurred. Dalit politics today is as much about a search for aggregation as it is about setting dalits apart from the rest of the caste Hindus. Mayawati's dilemma illustrates this well: in order to stay in power, she needs to retain her 'dalit' base by

maintaining the political aggregation of Jatavs with non-Jatav dalits. At the same time she knows only too well that all the dalit votes are insufficient for her to retain power. Hence the shift from bahun samaj to sarvajan samaj. Dalit leadership today is also at the receiving end of the politics of segregation, as in the Mala-Madiga dispute in Andhra Pradesh and Jatav-Balmiki differences in much of North India. Faced with these demands, the dalit leadership often ends up behaving just as the nationalist leadership did vis-a-vis the forces of social justice.

This context requires us to think about aggregative politics of social justice. At an abstract plane, Lohia appears to offer a way out. His politics of social justice was aggregative in its impulse. This aggregation was multi-dimensional: he was for fusing various caste-groups under an umbrella category like shudra; he wanted to bring together various caste groups such as the shudra with dalits and adivasis; and he proposed an alliance of victims of the caste system with Muslims, women and the poor. To be sure, there was necessarily a segregative element in this aggregative politics. Lohia's sharp attack on upper caste Hindu domination of public and political life made him appear no different from advocates of segregative politics. But an overall understanding of Lohia's politics makes it clear that he was engaged in aggregating a historic bloc of the victims of multi-dimensional oppression and injustice in Indian society.

The difficulty is that this aggregative politics remained an abstract principle. Lohia's own politics and that of his followers did not manage to achieve even a

semblance of this aggregation. In effect, this tradition of politics of social justice remained a segregative politics of the backward castes or attempts at aggregation under the leadership of the better off backward castes. This politics was driven by compulsions not different from those of dalit politics: aggregative politics often fails to generate felt solidarity and does not translate into political energy. Confronting this radical difference between Ambedkar and Lohia thus invites us to face a historic challenge of constructing a politics of aggregation at the concrete level without losing a minimal coherence and loyalty of the groups whose cause it espouses. Both of them help us to frame this question but do not necessarily offer us answers.

The second radical difference pertains to their cultural politics. As noted above, both Ambedkar and Lohia recognized the spiritual need of the oppressed and underscored the necessity of combating caste ideology at the level of principles. But they proposed radically different ways of doing so. Ambedkar believed in destroying the fountainhead of the ideology of the caste system. He was convinced that the caste system drew its foundational principles from and was sanctified by the Hindu scriptures. Therefore, the high textual tradition of Hindu shastras was the principal site of his critique. His method was that of a hermeneutics of suspicion. For him the tradition was nothing but hierarchy and oppression and any voice of protest within this tradition was necessarily compromised. Hence the need for a critique from outside. Ambedkar drew upon traditions of western rationalism to attack the Hindu ideology of hierarchy. Much of the dalit movement after Ambedkar has followed him in this strategy.

The trouble with this strategy is that more often than not it fails to establish a meaningful connect with the world view of those whose cause it espouses; by depriving its subjects of identity, memory and history, this politics often disempowers itself.

Lohia offers a radically different path of internal critique. He was simply not interested in the high textual tradition of the Vedas or dharmashastras. His favourite site was Hindu mythology and epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata. His critique did not operate from outside; he picked up his counter-symbols and counter-narratives from within these mythologies. Ram's maryada was juxtaposed to Krishna's amaryadit personality, Draupadi was invoked as a model of womanhood to counter Savitri, and alternative to the Brahminic Vashishtha tradition of Hinduism was the Valmiki tradition. Instead of debunking mythologies, Lohia preferred a retelling of these stories. Lohia engaged with deities and other mythological characters with unabashed admiration and yet from an avowedly atheist position that reserved the right to be irreverent and critical.

Lohia enunciated this new and innovative form of cultural politics through his lectures and public positions, but could not translate this into politics on the ground. Unlike Ambedkar's critique, Lohia's brand of cultural criticism did not leave behind a political legacy outside a small circle of intellectuals. This absence was not accidental and points to the difficulties in turning Lohia's critique into vibrant politics. Unlike Ambedkar, Lohia's cultural politics remained in the form of hints and was never spelt out. No wonder, his followers picked up the symbols

and phrases but not the point. Lohia himself deftly combined admiration for mythological figures with their thoroughgoing critique, but did not specify the grounds of such a critique. This left open the possibility of a less critical engagement with traditions that Ambedkar alerted us to. In this respect too, an appreciation of the radical differences between Ambedkar and Lohia reminds us of the need for a new cultural politics of social justice, a politics that combines understanding with critique that marshals powerful cultural resources to mount an effective attack on a system of injustice and oppression.

The dialogue between Ambedkar and Lohia did not take place, much to the eternal regret of advocates of social justice who would have liked them to come together. However, it is not clear that such a dialogue would have been successful had it taken place in their own lifetime. Ambedkar and Lohia were both strong-headed leaders, with a grudge against history. They thought in and spoke very different political vocabularies. Besides, Lohia's social location – he was after all a caste Hindu Bania – did not help. Therefore, it is hard to be sanguine about the outcome of a dialogue.

The attitude of their followers confirms this suspicion. The Ambedkarites are still unwilling to trust Lohia, or any socialist for that matter, as ideological ancestors. Mulayam Singh Yadav's invocation of Lohia may have confirmed his image as an OBC champion. Lohia's attempt to think of caste along with class and gender is likely to appear as a dilution to the Ambedkarites. To the Lohiaites, anyone other than their own 'doctor sahib' is unacceptable. They think that Lohia

had transcended the one-dimensional thinking represented by Ambedkar. Reading Ambedkar after Lohia would look to them like reading Feuerbach after having understood Marx. In this sense, it was perhaps not all that tragic that Ambedkar and Lohia did not meet. Perhaps they wished to save their dialogue for another century.

This article is an abridged version of a longer research paper under preparation. I have omitted here the long exegeses on Ambedkar and Lohia and have removed notes and references, so as to present the main argument within the given word limit. The first draft of the paper was presented at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla and a revised version at the Faculty Retreat of the CSDS. I would like to thank all the participants for their generous comments and criticism. For a fuller version of the reading of the dilemmas of the politics of social justice in contemporary India, see my 'Rethinking Social Justice', Seminar, September 2009. For a detailed exposition of Lohia's ideas, including his views on caste, see my 'What is living and what is dead in Rammanohar Lohia?' Economic and Political Weekly, 2 October 2010.

- SEMINAR, January 2012.

Janata

Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on
Mumbai Bank
in favour of
JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai 400 007

Concerned for Working Children

The Concerned for Working Children, India, has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize 2012, by three members of the Norwegian Parliament, Linda Hofstad Helleland, Gunn Karin Gjøl and André Oktay Dahl. In their nomination letter sent to the Nobel Committee, they have written: "Since 1980, Concerned for Working Children (CWC) has contributed to several initiatives with such children's rights organisations as Bhima Sangha and Makkala Panchayats (children's councils) in the state of Karnataka in India to strengthen the influence of children. The organisation and its network have been pioneers in children's participation within research, public planning, youth democracy, media and other areas. Few, if any, other local organisations elsewhere have contributed as much to this work. CWC is also an active contributor in the joint international work for the improvement of children's participation".

The nomination by the Norwegian parliamentarians is for three organisations that promote the rights of children, Concerned for Working Children, Save the Children, and the UNICEF. Their formal letter ends with these lines, "An award to these three organisations would greatly contribute to a much-needed increase in the worldwide focus and attention on the children's right to participation."

We are a small organisation and yet we have managed to impact on child rights policy and programming both locally and globally, bringing the right to children's participation and self-determination centre stage. This nomination is in itself a great

honour. Since the last three decades, the Concerned for Working Children has been working in partnership with children from the most marginalised communities, especially working children, to realise their rights, with emphasis on their right to participation in decision making processes. We are now recognised globally for our work related to child labour, children's rights, children's citizenship and education. Our genesis goes way back to the 1970s. We have worked on the issue of children's participation as a fundamental right within the gamut of children's rights even prior to the drafting and the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The founders of CWC (Nandana Reddy and Damodara Acharya) are from the trade union movement - initially working with adult workers in the informal or unorganised sector of labour. As the workforce included many children below the age of 18 years who demanded that their issues also be addressed, CWC was born marking the beginning of a long, rich and exciting partnership with working children. One of the first outcomes of this collaboration was the National Draft Bill on Child Labour. It recommended long term sustainable solutions for child workers that dealt with the root causes of the problem, in consultation with working children, to ensure that all their rights were upheld - instead of knee-jerk reactions that harm children by pushing them into more 'invisible' sectors where exploitation is more severe. The Bill led to the present National Law on Child Labour - sadly the Law totally violated the

framework of our Bill. Yet, through our legislative engagement, CWC brought child labour centre stage in India and was the first organisation in the country to begin work on this issue.

Since 1980, CWC has contributed to various initiatives towards building several child-led organisations, starting with Bhima Sangha, the first ever children's own organisation in Asia, by empowering the working children in Karnataka to raise their voice demanding for the realisation of all their rights, without conditionalities. CWC has also been facilitating organisations of school-going children and children of migrant communities in coastal Udupi district, in Bellary district and in Bangalore city, Karnataka, India.

That Bhima Sangha spearheaded children's protagonism in Asia and paved the way in the region for the creation of spaces for children to participate in decision making processes, from local to the international level is globally recognised.

CWC has advocated for children's citizenship and facilitated them to form their own councils, Makkala Panchayats, and conduct the first ever children's own Grama Sabha, as early as 2002, through which children held their local governments accountable. The Makkala Panchayats enabled sustained engagement of children with the local governance processes and the children's Grama Sabhas, have clearly been an affirmation that children are citizens of today and demonstrate the importance of children's participation in

upholding and nurturing democracy. Today, the State of Karnataka has made children's Grama Sabhas mandatory in all its 5600 rural Local Governments.

We not only advocate for children's rights in all policy discourses, but also enable the participation of children in such decision making process to ensure their view points get the attention they deserve. As the chairperson of the International Working Group on Child Labour, Nandana Reddy paved the way for the formation of the International Movement of Working Children in 1996. Subsequently with her colleagues and collaborators she made it possible for children to critique and input into ILO's Convention 182 on child labour in 1997. In 1998, The first ever children's own alternate report 'the Working Children's Report' to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child was facilitated by the CWC. CWC and its various networks have facilitated children to be pioneers in areas of child-led research and information management, where children own their own information; public planning; social mobilisation such as campaigns against child marriages, media advocacy and policy advocacy.

In all these processes, the involvement of children, their enthusiasm, their unerring sense of justice and their compassionate response to people's problems have drawn many supportive adults into the process.

CWC, in partnership with organisations around the world is engaged in building capacities of children to realise their right to participation and in enabling adults in developmental organisations,

academic institutions, UN agencies, international donor agencies and governments to create an environment that recognises and enables children's Right to Self Determination. For instance it has provided assistance to the Government of Mongolia and the Government of the Netherlands to develop their strategies to work with children. It has worked in countries such as Zambia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Cambodia, Laos, Japan to name a few, to advocate for children's right to participation.

The credit of this nomination goes to our primary constituency and partners – working children – and the many battles they have fought in numerous forums at home and around the world for their voices to be heard. Their struggle has always been a peaceful one and now one of patience as they continue their

crusade in an environment that not only does not recognise them as workers, but has criminalised their work.

The Concerned for Working Children believes in children's democratic participation and their right to determine the course of their lives – the present and future – by transforming the past and making choices, a principle expounded by Mahatma Gandhi. This however, is barely recognised in the letter and in practice it is largely believed that using compulsion to make children 'participate' in services that are provided – be it health care or education – without allowing children to determine the nature and quality of these services, is a fulfilment of children's rights. We, adults by and large, still think that we know what is best for children and that children don't.

–CWC

Kerala Socialist Conference

The first state conference of the Socialist Party (India) was held on 15th January 2012 in Thiruvananthapuram. The conference was attended by more than 250 delegates from all the 14 districts of Kerala, representing cross sections of the society including women. The conference proceedings started after garlanding the statues of Mahatma Gandhi, Ponnara Sreedhar, Pattom Thanu Pillai and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose situated at the various places in the city. Veteran Socialist leader Balaraman Nambiar hoisted the party flag erected in front of University Students' Centre, the conference venue, named as Comrade Ponnara Sreedhar Nagar, the socialist leader of Kerala in

1930- 40s. G. Pradeep conducted the meeting which was presided over by S. Rajashekharan Nair, national executive member from Kerala. K.S.Sajith, convener of the reception committee, welcomed the gathering.

National president Bhai Vaidya, in his inaugural address, stressed the need for unity of socialists to counter and uproot the neo-liberal regime in the country and the world. He called upon the cadres to make the Socialist Party a viable platform for such unity. Only socialism can save the human civilization, he added. Dr. Prem Singh, general secretary and spokesman of the party reminded the cadres that on

(Continued on Page 15)

People's Participation and Human Development: Challenges of Reconstructing Indian Polity - III

Ravi Kiran Jain

Those who express too much resentment against corruption and consider 'corruption' to be the central issue, ignore the "real issues of governance" as if corruption can be removed in this centralized system where bureaucrats have vast powers, and as if by the removal of corruption all the problems of the people will be solved. Corruption is the use of one's position for illegitimate private gains. It is a serious problem, not easy to combat so long as this system is not changed by participatory democracy. In our country as seen above corruption started soon after independence and was found even during the time of Nehru. But after Indira Gandhi advanced the Parliamentary Elections in 1971 which otherwise were due in 1972 and dumped money in favour of her party candidates and thereafter securing thumping majority made the executive branch of the government supreme, corruption increased in leaps and bounds. Then after 1991 'reforms', the rules and lines of authority became unclear. There were made less constraints by legal principles. Openness in the conduct of public business can help minimize corruption. This requires other things, open tendering of contracts and keeping registers of business officials. Together with an educated electorate and a free press, this approach can remove the easier opportunities and raise the deterrent of detection. But most unfortunate part so far as

our country is concerned, the two factors, "educated electorate" and "a free press" are ineffective to work as a deterrent. The reason is that there is a law of diminishing marginal interest operating in India. There was a time when exposures of even minor cases of corruption used to be the topics of debate in Parliament, the media and other public forums. V. P. Singh became Prime Minister by making corruption an issue. But after 1991, issues like corruption and misconduct of politicians and public servants had largely gone out of public debates. In the 1950s and through the 1960s and right upto the 1980s society and media were perhaps more alert to public misconduct, judging from the coverage that cases like Kairon, Nagarwala and Bofors scandals received. But now of late the role of media in systemic corruption can not be undermined as it shows its involvement through paid news and sometimes unethical support to the corrupt.

Stage came when there was a corresponding change in the attitude of the corrupt or those facing charges of corruption. It was there up to 1988-89 when V.P. Singh raised the issue, embarrassment, defensiveness or even a readiness to quit office when faced with charges of corruptions, there came a brazen nonchalance and sometimes even an aggressiveness - "so-what"?-posture. This perceived change in the attitude towards corruption

almost coincides with the country's period of economic liberalization. It appears that there was general apathy for some time because corruption had become a normal fact of public life and there was a feeling that an exposure did not help improve the situation at all. But then this apathy turned into a suppressed anger which ultimately erupted with the fast of Anna Hazare and his demand for an enactment of Jan Lokpal to punish the corrupt.

If those who are in power are corrupt, the governance at their hands will be chaotic. Corruption in government increases poverty in many ways. Most directly, corruption diverts resources to the rich people, who can afford to pay bribes, and away from the poor people who cannot. Corruption also weakens government and lessens their ability to fight poverty. It reduces tax revenues, and thus resources available for public services. And if administrations are assumed to be corrupt, honest people tend to avoid public service, so the quality of personnel suffers. More generally, corruption eats away the fabric of public life leading to increase in lawlessness and undermining of social and political stability.

In a centralized system of governance with a strong bureaucracy where discretionary powers are given to the authorities concerned, some corruption is

probably unavoidable but the corruption of the magnitude which is prevailing in our country is on account of the institutional decay, the process of which started in 1971. There were scams even during the Prime-Ministership of Nehru. But then after 1971 corruption has not only been institutionalized but the whole political structure has been hijacked by the process of criminalization of politics, giving rise to mafia-raj. Things have reached to such a pass that on the floor of the House, the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh expressed that it was the coalition compulsion on account of which he was not able to take an effective step to stop the activities of his Cabinet colleague Raja, who was involved in 2G Spectrum Scam. It means that in order to keep him in majority, a Prime Minister may ignore illegal act of his Cabinet colleague. There was a lot of hue and cry in the Parliament on this issue. But Dr. Manmohan Singh continues to be the Prime Minister of a coalition government and he has set a wrong precedent by not resigning although owning collective responsibility of the Cabinet in the Parliamentary democracy. It was in this backdrop that Anna Hazare's fast drew the attention of the people of this country. In order to understand the root cause of corruption in our country we have to take stock of events starting from 1971 when Indira Gandhi started the process of weakening the institutions up to 2011 when the present Prime Minister on the floor of the house shamelessly expressed his inability to check the activities of his cabinet colleague.

If we look around, we see that people are helplessly dependent almost entirely on political leaders in

our parliamentary system knowing fully well that these political leaders are, to say the least, ignoble. Therefore, today there is a dire need to create a new generation of leadership through a plurality of truly democratic structure. The fight against corruption can be fought by a people's movement to have good governance on the fundamental principles contained in Part IV of the Constitution. It is now clear as daylight that the centralized system of governance has failed to govern on those principles.

The word 'governance appears only in Part IV of our Constitution which relates to Directive Principles of State Policy, wherein it is provided that the principles contained in that part are "fundamental in the governance of the country." Part III and Part IV of the Constitution provide for Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy respectively. The Fundamental Rights contained in Part III were said to be enforceable through the Courts. The Directive Principles of State Policy were not enforceable through the courts 'but the principles therein laid down were nevertheless fundamental to the governance of the country and it is the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws.' Article 38(1) of the Constitution provides: 'The State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effective as it may a social order in which Justice, social, economic and political shall inform all the institutions of the national life'. Article 38(2) provides: 'The State shall, in particular, strive to minimize the inequalities in income, and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities, not only amongst individuals but also amongst groups

of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations. Article 39 provides: 'The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing - (a) that the citizens, men and women, equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood; (b) that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good; (c) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment; (d) that there is equal pay for equal work; (e) that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength; and (f) the children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected. Article 45 mandated the State to provide within a period of 10 years every child free and compulsory education till they completed the age of fourteen years. It means that by 25th January, 1960 every child below the age of fourteen years in this country was supposed to be given free and compulsory education. There was a time-bound scheme of development with social justice in these directives at least regarding the first 'task of the Assembly'.

For about 61 long years, the governments of this country – Central as well as State – have been negligent and have been putting aside the Directive Principles of State Policy which has resulted in great economic and social disparity and deprivation of the basic rights

like education, health, right to work etc. The so-called development which has taken place in our country till now by the centralized system of governance is only bringing disaster. Forest conservation, keeping rivers free from pollution, having pure air, pure water, providing primary education and other necessities of life to the people of India will become impossible in the foreseeable future if this centralized system of governance continues and is not replaced by the decentralized system of governance of the people, by the people and for the people as envisaged in Part IX and IX-A of the Constitution of India. If this is not done, depletion of natural resources will eventually create a total chaos in the society.

Part IX and IXA of the Constitution have brought, through Article 243 to 243 ZG, the Panchayats, Zilla Parishads and Municipalities as constitutional instrumentalities to elongate the socio-economic and political democracy under the rule of law. Articles 243G and 243W enjoin preparation of plans for economic development and social justice. The State, i.e., the Union of India, the State Governments and the local bodies constitute an integral executive to implement the directive principles contained in Part IV through planned development under the rule of law.

The Constitution decentralizes the governance of the States by a four tier administration i.e. Central Government, State Government, Union territories, Municipalities and Panchayats. See Constitution for Municipalities and Panchayats: Part IX(Panchayats) and Part IX-A (Municipalities) introduced through the Constitution 73rd Amendment Act, making

the peoples participation in the democratic process from grass root level a reality. Participation means that people are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural and political processes that affect their lives. People may, in some cases, have complete and direct control over these process - in other cases, the control may be partial or indirect. The important thing is that people have constant access to decision – making and power. Participation in

this sense is an essential element of human development. Participation of the people in governance of the State is sine qua non of functional democracy implies people's participation not only in decision making about preparation of plans for economic development and social justice but also in execution of such plans. What should be the model of development can now be decided by the people themselves.

(to be concluded)

(Continued from Page 12)

28 May, 2011, the foundation day of the party, we promised to the common masses that the Socialist Party would fight relentlessly to establish a socialist order in the country.. He suggested that the idea of 'Saptkranti' (seven revolutions), envisaged by Dr. Lohia, could be the guiding light for a socialist revolution.

Veteran socialist leader P.Vishwambaran, the party's national general secretary, Noorul Ameen, parliamentary board member Jaya Vindiyala and Vinayak Nayak, president, Socialist Party of Goa, also addressed the conference.

The afternoon session, presided over by Shri Gangadharan, was devoted to discussion on various resolutions. Remembrance resolution was moved by G.Pradeep and seconded by Muhammed Kasim; policy resolution moved by Pradeep was seconded by James. Political resolution was moved by George Jacob and seconded by Lijo. All the resolutions were unanimously approved by the delegates. P. B. R. Pillai, ex-MLA, Azees, Balaraman Nambiar, Dr. Micheal, Vargheese Vattekkad and others participated in the discussion.

The conference selected the following office bearers of the party's Kerala unit. President-S. Rajashekharan Nair, Vice-President-Vargheese Vattekkad, General Secretary-Pradeep Gopalakrishnan, Secretary-K.S.Sajith, Treasurer-G. Sreeprakash. Executive Committee Members: Gpoakumar, Harilal, Krishnamurthy, Faizal, C.D.Anil, A.K.Santha, Jayasree Panayamcheri, G.Govind Prasad, Shyam Kumar, George Jacob, Manoj, Jayashankar, Moideen Cherukara, Amarnath, Kullapully Ummer, James and C.Bhaskaran. Special invitees : E.K.Sreenivasan, P.P.Raveendran, V.V.Raghavan. Parliamentary Board : N.K.Gangadharan, Balaraman Nambiar and Azeez. Front Organisation Conveners: Socialist Yuvajan Sabha-Lijo, Kottayam, Socialist Mahila Sabha- A.K.Santha and Jayasree. A meeting of the state office bearers with Bhai Vaidya was held next day. The meeting decided 1. to enroll 50,000 ordinary members and 2500 active members. 2. to convene district-wise workers meetings and thereafter conduct district conferences. 3. to contest the Piravom bye election of Kerala Legislative Assembly.

–G. Pradeep



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 67 No. 9

March 25, 2012

The Razor's Edge

S.Viswam

Rough and the Smooth

Time for Kashmir Solution

Kuldip Nayar

**How Indira-Abdullah Accord
was signed in 1974?**

Balraj Puri

The Well-to-do Must

Tighten the Belts

Pannalal Surana

Building New Political Alliance

D. K. Giri

Has Arab Spring

Changed Direction?

Nitish Chakravarty

Understanding Anna Movement

Nishikant Mohapatra

A Builder of Modern India

Mastram Kapoor

Working Children

Nandana Reddy

Are there Limits to

Bahujan Politics?

K. S. Chalam

Budget -Who Gains?

Rakesh Manchanda

**The Opposition to GM Crops
and Nuclear Power Plants**

Editor :

G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

It is a sobering thought that the country is being spared a snap poll for Parliament even though the polity has invested itself with all the conditions favouring one. The UPA II has touched nadir in terms of its political influence and clout having already lost its credibility, legitimacy and goodwill. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance has too many leaders all of them displaying a kind of political craftsmanship that smacks at once of unbridled ambition devoid of merit. The NDA's major ally is Janata Dal (United) which exists only in name, buttressed by the presence in it of Bihar's Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. The other leader is Sharad Yadav who seems to have little to contribute to the party or its growth. The parties that are not in either of the two major alliances would dearly like to have a change in the present political arrangement, but none have the strength to fight without the backing of their alliance majors. Indeed, for that matter, both the UPA II and the BJP would dearly like to get rid of their respective partners and secure a comfortable majority for themselves but this is clearly an impossible proposition. So, yielding to the line of least resistance, all the parties in the country, big and small, major and minor, regional or national,

are chugging along in the hope of the political situation undergoing a dramatic overnight change induced by the sudden depletion of numbers backing the UPA II. The ruling coalition, headed by the well-meaning but totally ineffective Manmohan Singh and "guided" by the self-centred political ignorant bent upon foisting her son on the nation as the next prime minister (in the event the UPA coalition wins), is getting a good training in the art of political survival by hanging on to the apron strings of its supporting parties. It has overcome three major hurdles riding piggy-bank on the shoulders of the Samajwadi Party (which boldly sat in the House and voted) and the Trinamool and the Bahujan Samaj Party both of which stayed away from the House and thus enabled the ruling coalition to win. Otherwise the UPA would have had its Waterloo in Parliament on Tuesday itself when the NCTC amendments were voted upon.

Mamata Banerjee talked of how the UPA's coalition partners were not being treated with respect ("izzat"), how her own party which has a valuable voting strength of 15 is not consulted or given its due, how her party does not even have a room of its own in the vast sprawling Parliament

House. All legitimate grievances, but all these so-called “humiliations” were not sprung on her overnight. She has let all these grievances remain because they have not yet become “issues” for her to extract political benefits for herself. Her track record shows that she shows no consideration for others when her own cause is involved, yet she expects the world to dance around her! She is entitled to cheers no doubt for having won Bengal, but that is just where it ends because her administrative record is a disaster and this the people of West Bengal now have learnt to accept. How much “izzat” did she accord the Prime Minister when she pulled out of the Teesta Waters Agreement with Bangladesh abruptly and made Dr. Manmohan Singh squirm in Dhaka?

The current political scenario is a fast-changing one in which the Congress is being forced to fashion a new kind of political equation and relation with parties that were gunning for it till yesterday. At the same time, it has to adjust to the emerging reality that leaders of regional parties like Trinamool, Telugu Desam, the two DMKs, Odisha’s Biju Janata Dal leader Naveen Patnaik, and leaders of sundry odd and small parties want to gang up in an alternate grouping, popularly styled as the Third Front. The Congress has won some breathing time, and we need to wait to see how it utilizes this windfall of an opportunity, a second chance at survival. Right now, the BJP does not look like an alternative to the Congress and its partners and allies. It is weaker than the Congress and has more liabilities than assets in its leaders and rank and file. But then this party will rouse up communal passions in the name of Ram and

(Continued on Page 7)

Rough and the Smooth

Students and analysts of Indian economy tend to treat the annual budget and the preceding Economic Survey as fairly reliable barometers of the economic health of the nation.

The Survey is meant to tell you how things should be, and the budget how things really are. Being skilled interpreters economists are adept at reading the two documents in the way they want the answers to fit. The incredible fact is that economists are the only educated animals in the world who can argue that black is white and white is black without losing credibility. Media generally uses colloquially understood words to describe the budget: harsh, soft, moderate, cruel, ruthless and please-all are some of the words used to tell the readers whether the budget is out to get you or whether the Finance Minister has been in a generous and expansive mood and not taxed your daily cup of tea, your bidi or cigarette, your soap and your wife’s kitchen items. This year, you would have noticed that the media has found no appropriate word to describe the kind of budget Pranabda has unleashed on the weary public. He has imposed no new tax; he has only rationalized the income tax structure while at the same time he has given some relief to the salaried tax payers. But this does not make the budget a pro-common man’s. Since he has not enhanced the corporate taxes, it is not pro-Big Business either! So it is neither pro-poor nor pro-rich in its entirety though in some matters it hits both indirectly and where it hurts most. Then, you examine the budget to find out if its impact will be immediate or in the course of time. When you find that a hike in diesel prices is just around the corner

and that meanwhile cooking gas and edible oil prices are likely to hit the upward curve, whatever sympathy you had for Pranabda evaporates!

Indian budgets are complicated documents to read and understand immediately. You have to know how cleverly finance ministers tend to hide their fangs and from what unexpected sources they tend to mobilize revenues. In that regard too, Pranabda’s exercise this year leaves many things unsaid even while hinting that he is quite aware that he is only fooling the people by seeming to be cruel only in order to be kind. In a market environment in which people are dishing out as much as Rs.40 for a kilogram of potatoes and Rs. 30 for the lowly cabbage, the Finance Minister does not even apologise for not doing anything to bring down the prices of daily essentials. Indeed, reading through his lengthy speech, one does not come across the word “prices” at all. He seems to have assumed that the urban and rural dwellers are willingly paying the high prices cheerfully enough out of a sense of patriotic commitment. Take the word subsidies. Pranabda is clearly afraid of the word. On the issue of whether he proposes increasing subsidies or reducing them, his speech is delightfully vague. We do not know his intentions even three days after the budget presentation. The only answer you get is that for the present he wants to maintain the status quo. But then what happens to the aam aadmi whose interests Sonia Gandhi is committed to protect? Well, says Pranabda, there are other things for the common man. Like, for instance? Well, the allocation for the National Rural Health Mission has been

raised. Oh, good, you say. What about the National Urban Health Mission? On that the government will get back to you he says by and by. Let us set it up first. But what about health care in general? No more extra money for public health, sanitation, drinking water supply? Well, perhaps next year. Enough has already been done so far. But, Pranabda, you have set aside virtually no new funds for primary or secondary education, nothing for new schools or new hospitals or new rural primary health care centres? Perhaps next year!

Pranabda is a good man and often enough in the past he has tried to help the aam aadmi, but then what is the poor man to do when inflation is eating away whatever he saves for the poor? He always tries to get more revenues for the exchequer. This year he tried to get some funds which the state was likely to be deprived of because the Supreme Court had held that Vodafone company was not liable to pay tax to the Indian government on a deal concluded outside its shores. Pranabda sought to rectify matters by amending the taxation laws retrospectively. His move left the corporates scared. They argued that such retroacted recoveries would sap investor confidence. Pranabda must have been shocked to see that the Supreme Court was in no mood to oblige him. The court refused to review its earlier decision. The Income Tax Department had sought to raise nearly Rs. 11,000 crores in tax from Vodafone and Hutchison Group. Now, instead of getting monies, the government is having to refund what it has collected—about Rs. 2500 crore and interest!

(Continued on Page 13)

Between the lines

Time for Kashmir Solution

Kuldip Nayar

There was a time when any statement on Kashmir, either by the Prime Minister of India or that of Pakistan used to create rumpus. Politicians and the media on both sides would dwell on for several days on what a particular remark tried to convey.

Pakistan Prime Minister Yusuf Reza Gilani said the other day that his country would seek a solution on Kashmir through a dialogue, not hostilities. I have not seen any comment in India nor have I found any Pakistani opposition leaders or the press taking notice of it. More significant has been the silence of pro-terrorist groups which are talking in terms of jihad against India all the time. The usual Pakistani reiteration that Kashmiri would not be allowed to stay on the backburner is there. President Asif Ali Zardari has said this week that Pakistan has not forgotten Kashmir. But this does not change the ground realities which have recognised that the line of control is the border between India and Pakistan.

Gilani has reiterated what the late Zulfikhar Ali Bhutto had enunciated in the Shimla Agreement four decades ago. It says: "In Jammu and Kashmir, the line of control resulting from the ceasefire of December 17, 1971, shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognized position of either side. Neither side shall seek to alter it unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations.

Both sides further undertake to refrain from the threat of the use of force in violation of this line." The agreement has stood the test of time for more than three decades and except for the Kargil misadventure there has been peace.

Perhaps leaders of the Pakistan government, including the hawks, have come to realise that there is no alternative to amity. Perhaps the peace lobby on both sides has got expanded for even the governments to notice and they refrain from giving ultimatums as it used to happen not until long ago. Perhaps New Delhi's warning by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru that any attack on Kashmir would be regarded as an attack on India has gone home. Three wars, plus the misadventure at Kargil have proved that New Delhi will resist with all its force any push by Islamabad. Therefore, Prime Minister Gilani's observation not only makes sense but throws up another opportunity. Both the countries have to solve Kashmir or, for that matter, any other problem peacefully. It is a sort of no-war pact without the formality of signing one.

Yet Gilani's statement should not lull India into complacency. Kashmir continues to be a problem. Every now and then there is an incident in the Valley to register the people's discontent. Even the elected government, headed by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, has said more than once that Kashmir cannot

***With Best Compliments
from***

Transport & Dock Workers' Union, Mumbai.

**P.D'Mello Bhawan, P.D'Mello Road,
Carnac Bunder, Mumbai, 400 038.**

Tel.No.: 2261 6951/52

Telegraphic Address :

Fax No.: 2265 9087.

"DOCKUNION" Mumbai-38.

E-mail : dockunion1@rediffmail.com

Dockunion2010@gmail.com

***CHAMPIONING THE INTEREST OF
PORT, DOCK & TRANSPORT WORKERS***

**S.R. Kulkarni
(President)**

**Late. M.G. Kotwal
(Sr.Vice-President)**

**P.K. Raman
Baban Mete**

**S.R. Yadav
Madhukar Bhondve**

**Rajaram Shinde
Nivruti Dhumal**

(Secretaries)

**Anil Golatkar
(Treasurer)**

**Shivaji Mudhe
(Jt.Treasurer)**

be sorted out without Pakistan's participation.

India's armed forces too are not happy with the situation because the successive army commanders of Jammu and Kashmir have said that it is a political problem, not a military one. Yet India continues to station a large number of troops in Kashmir. It has been experienced again and again that they are not trained to deal with domestic troubles.

The country's defence is understandable but the forces should be on the border, and not used for the law and order purpose. The stationing of forces within the state only confirms that the government has no solution to the situation and it does not know how to settle the problem.

True, New Delhi has tackled the international opinion effectively. There is hardly any adverse notice abroad. But this does not solve the problem. At best it remains suppressed. Still there is civil society in India which has certain obligations that a democratic polity has to carry out.

If the Kashmiris remain unhappy and the government they elect too feels that the problem has to be sorted out with Pakistan, New Delhi has to face the fact. This does not necessarily mean that Islamabad's demands have to be met. The latter too has to take certain realities into consideration and one of them is that India can never have another division on the basis of religion.

The Valley, predominantly of Muslims, has gone its own way and has kept at distance, both the Hindu-majority Jammu and the Buddhist-majority Ladakh. Therefore, when

President Asif Zardari, says that Pakistan would continue to support the Kashmir, he is only underlining the two-nation theory which India buried deep long ago. I do not think that even the intelligentsia in Pakistan has any faith left in that theory. But that is not the point at issue. It is Kashmir which I believe should get attention after Gilani's olive branch.

I do not agree with those who argue that what Pakistan could not get through wars has no case to claim it on the table. What the two countries have to realize is that they have to give up their entrenched positions. Peace and friendship is more important than hostility. The extremists will continue to talk of hostilities because they have developed a vested interest in an unsettled situation.

I have a solution to offer. Both governments should transfer all subjects except defence and foreign affairs to Kashmir and soften the border so that the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the Azad Kashmir meet and plan jointly the development of their region. They can have their own air service and trade and cultural missions abroad. Visitors, not from the region, will seek visa to enter either Kashmir.

Azad Kashmir will be part of Pakistan and Jammu Kashmir, of India. The case pending before the UN would be withdrawn. The part of my proposal is that the Lok Sabha's elected members from Jammu and Kashmir should sit in Pakistan's National Assembly and those of Azad Kashmir in India's Lok Sabha. This is aimed at setting a pattern for the two countries to come closer in the future.

Studies in Socialism

By

Ashok Mehta

Published by

Bhartiya Vidya Bhuvan
Centre for Socialist Studies
Bangaluru

Price Rs. 250.00 postage extra

Send your order to

Centre for Socialist Studies
191, 10th Cross, 10th Main,
NGFI Layout
Nagurbani, Bengaluru 560 072

Bhartiya Vidya Bhuvan
Munshi Sadan
Chowpatty, Mumbai 400 007

or

Janata Trust

How Indira-Abdullah Accord was signed in 1974?

Balraj Puri

In 1964, after the sudden death of Pandit Nehru, Sheikh Abdullah returned from Pakistan, cutting his journey short. I went to the Delhi airport to receive him. After landing, he told me to take him first to Nehru's Samadhi. He was too stunned by the tragic news that he could hardly utter a brief sentence. He said that had he known that Panditji's death was so near, he would not have gone to Pakistan. He had got full agreement here on all points. I just said to him that "be sure you do not miss the bus again."

The bus did come again in the form of revolt in Bangladesh, which India was supporting. I advised Sheikh Sahib to issue a statement offering support to India's Bangladesh policy, whether it agreed to apply the same principles to Kashmir for which it was supporting revolt in Bangladesh, whether it was for its independence or autonomy. India was at that time prepared to pay maximum price for support on Bangladesh. Since Sheikh Sahib was the tallest Muslim leader of the subcontinent, his support was most valuable. Sheikh Sahib asked me to draft a statement for him, which I did. But the actual statement that appeared in the media was exactly opposite to what we had agreed. Sheikh Sahib told me that his advisor had taken the liberty to change the draft. I told him that he had missed the bus again. He suggested that he should start the process. Let it take its time.

Meanwhile, Indira Gandhi visited Jammu after Bangladesh revolt had succeeded. In celebration of the

victory, she addressed series of public meetings. She was hailed as goddess Durga. At a public meeting she was addressing in Jammu, I requested her secretary for an appointment with her. He told me "absolutely no appointments at Jammu. She is too tired. This is her last activity. She would have a quite dinner and retire. Even the Governor and Chief Minister would come to see her off. But no appointment with her." I had a letter addressed to her in my pocket. I requested her secretary to deliver that letter to her which would not tire her. The brief letter requested for an appointment and stated: "An agreement with Sheikh Abdullah is possible in which if you like, I can help."

The secretary agreed to deliver the letter. When I reached my house, I was told that there were continuous calls from Mrs Gandhi asking me to come to see her immediately. I rushed to the Raj Bhavan, where she was staying. She asked me "what are Sheikh Abdullah's terms? I replied that it was not possible to accept all his terms. His right to demand autonomy should be conceded without conceding it. She felt interested and said, "Let us sit and you explain this point." I explained: "a number of regional leaders and chief ministers are demanding autonomy for their regions which was not conceded. The same can be applied to Kashmir." She asked "will it work." I said "let us try."

Eventually G P Parthasarthy and Mirza Afzal Baig started series of talks on behalf of Mrs Gandhi and

Sheikh Abdullah respectively. The talks proceeded smoothly till the negotiations were struck on the nomenclature of the Governor and the Chief Minister. Both Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Abdullah complained to me about the deadlock in the talks. I did not betray any disappointment and suggested that let them agree to disagree on one point. Agreement to disagree was also a form of agreement. The agreement, as suggested by me and signed by the negotiators on November 13, 1974 at New Delhi, was as follows:

1. The State of Jammu and Kashmir, which is a constituent unit of the Union of India, shall in its relations with the Union, continue to be governed by Article 370 of the Constitution of India.

2. The residuary powers of legislation, shall remain with the State, however, Parliament will continue to have power to make laws relating to the prevention of activities directed towards disclaiming, questioning or disrupting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India or bringing about secession of a part of the territory of India from the Union or causing insult to the Indian National Flag, the Indian National Anthem and the Constitution.

3. Where any provision of the Constitution of India had been applied to the State of Jammu and Kashmir with adaptations and modifications, such adaptations and modifications can be altered or repealed by an Order of the

President under Article 370, each individual proposal in the behalf being considered on its merits, but provisions of the Constitution of India already applied to the State of Jammu and Kashmir without adaptation or modification are unalterable.

4. With a view to assuring freedom to the State of Jammu and Kashmir to have its own legislation on matters like welfare measures, cultural, matters, social security, personal law, and procedural laws, in a manner suited to the special conditions in the State, it is agreed that the State government can review the laws made by Parliament or extended to the state after 1953 on any matter relatable to the Concurrent List and may decide which of them, in its opinion, needs amendment or repeal. Thereafter, appropriate steps may be taken under Article 254 of the Constitution of India. The grant of President's assent to such legislation would be sympathetically considered. The same approach would be adopted in regard to the laws to the made by Parliament in future under the Proviso to Clause 2 of that Article; the State government shall be consulted regarding the application of any such law to the State and the views of the State government shall receive the fullest consideration.

5. As an arrangement reciprocal to what has been provided under Article 368, a suitable modification of that Article as applied to the State should be made by Presidential Order to the effect that no law made by the Legislature of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, seeking to make any change in or in the effect of any provision of the Constitution of the State of Jammu and Kashmir relating to any of the

undermentioned matters shall take effect unless the Bill, having been reserved for the consideration of the President, receives his assent; the matters are:

- (a) The appointment, powers, functions, duties, privileges and immunities of the Governor; and*
- (b) The following matters relating to Elections, namely, the superintendence, direction and control of Elections by the Election Commission of India, eligibility for inclusion in the electoral rolls without discrimination, adult suffrage, and composition of the Legislative Council, being matters specified in Sections 138, 139, 140 and 50 of the Constitution of the State of Jammu and Kashmir.*

6. No agreement was possible on the question of nomenclature of the Governor and the Chief Minister and the matter is therefore remitted to the principles.

The next step was automatic. Sheikh Abdullah assumed power as Chief Minister of the state on 26 February, 1975. He received a tumultuous reception everywhere. The people in the valley were particularly hysterical in welcoming their hero back in power.

In case of Jammu, the response to the Kashmir Accord was far less sharp apparently because, people and political elite of the region were not directly involved in Abdullah's relations with the centre.

The new cabinet he announced for the state, included his second in command Mirza Afzal Beg from Kashmir and D D Thakur, a retired judge of High Court from Jammu.

Mrs Gandhi offered to include me in her cabinet to compensate me for non-inclusion in Abdullah's cabinet. She advised me to tell Abdullah that I had done enough public work and wanted to retire.

When Abdullah came to Jammu to assume power, I invited him to dinner. He did come and said that I could not leave him in the lurch. He needed my support to work out the Accord. He argued that his following in Jammu was zero. I agreed to organise the National Conference, from the scratch, as its provincial president. The arrangement did not work. But that is a different story.

(Continued from Page 2)

build itself up, a danger to which all other parties and the country itself needs to be awake.

We dare say that in identical circumstances with more or less the same kind of pressures which the Congress is facing a leader like Indira Gandhi would have played her cards more smartly. She would have put the fear of the Lord into her opponents by just calling for a snap poll at a time when her adversaries least expect it and are thus caught napping. These days, it is the Congress that gets caught napping every other day.

With Best Compliments

From

**Manav Seva Samiti
Modi Nagar, UP.
Manufacturers of Khadi
Brand Glycerine Soap,
Shampoo and Massage
items.**

**Available at YMC counter
and Khadi Bhandar**



Rural India Focus

PRESENTING THE NATION WITH A REPLICABLE MODEL OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT



**ADIVASI
GIRLS
HOSTEL
AT TARA,
PANVEL**



**WEEKLY EYE
CAMPS AT
THE YMC
HOSPITAL,
TARA, PANVEL**



**RUNS THREE
HIGH
SCHOOLS**

YUSUF MEHERALLY CENTRE AND YOU

There are ways in which you can join the YMC movement in bringing education, healthcare, women empowerment, employment generation, relief and growth to our rural villages. Visit our Centre, volunteer your help, buy our products, become a Life Member. You could also support the cause by donating to our various initiatives.

SPONSOR AN ADIVASI GIRL'S HOSTEL STAY

It takes Rs.15,000 per year to meet the expenses for supporting a girl child's stay at the hostel in Tara, Panvel Taluka.

FINANCE A CATARACT SURGERY

10 to 15 eye operations are performed at the weekly eye camp held at the Maharashtra State Government funded hospital building. Sponsor a cataract operation for Rs. 15,000/-.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE SCHOOL CORPUS

YMC runs 3 high schools - 2 Marathi, 1 Urdu medium. With only 2 of these on government aid, the Centre needs Rs.1 crore as corpus to run the 3rd and maintain, conduct extra-curricular activities in all 3 and finance its building expansion plans. Give generously.



Yusuf Meherally Centre
D-15, Ganesh Prasad, 1st Floor,
Naushir Barucha Marg,
Grant Road (West),
Mumbai 400 007

Visit www.yusufmeherally.org,
Call: (022)-2387 0097,
Fax: (022)-2388 9738 or
E-mail : yusufmeherally@gmail.com

Space Donated by A Well Wisher

The Well-to-do Must Tighten the Belts

Pannalal Surana

“Great burden put on the people” was the shrill cry of the electronic media after the Budget for 2012-13 was presented to the parliament. And what was repeated umpteen times? The a/c travel has become costlier, cigarettes, drinks, eating out and such have become dearer, etc. The gold and silver traders all over the country declared a hartal for three days in protest against the 2% increase in the service tax. All this is really amusing - if not exasperating.

One may discuss the wisdom of enhancing all those levies in various contexts. But it cannot be said that all those levies have made life of common man more difficult. Any person having touch with ground realities knows it only too well that those are not items in the daily basket of the common man.

The rise in revenue deficit for the current fiscal year has exceeded the estimated figure and shot up to 5.6 %. It is certainly a cause for concern. Who are responsible for that? It is revealed that the actual travel expenses of the Union ministers would come to Rs.499.80 crores instead of the budgeted figure of Rs. 46.95 crores. The lavishness of the ministers is certainly deplorable. One finds that a minister's car is followed by a dozen or so cars of the officials. Why so much costly fuel is spent like water (well, that is also becoming costlier day by day)? The leaders of the ruling clique must be made answerable for that. But main reasons for huge increase in the revenue deficit are less recovery of taxes and non-tax

revenues and lower borrowings by the Government in the open market. Flow of foreign capital has also become slimmer. For the latter, let us not blame ourselves. There is great turmoil in the economies of the USA and European Union. That is beyond our control. We should welcome decreasing inflow of foreign capital. Self-help is the best policy. Our rate of household saving is in the range of 34-35 % of GDP. That is credit-worthy. We can certainly plan our development programs on its basis and the outcome would be commendable. Let us give a go-bye to the obsession with growth rate of 10 %. That is really not relevant. Instead, we should concentrate on the indices of human development like infant mortality, maternal deaths, falling sex ratio, rate of illiteracy, etc. Rate of saving of corporate and public sector must increase. Suitable policies should be devised. And the well-to-do sections should shed their craze for luxury goods and high-figh living. Simple, comfortable living is helpful to contented life and also to cultural creativity.

One Pulapri Balkrishnan, in an article in the Hindu of 13-3-12 has lamented for fall in public investment in general and in agriculture in particular during the last decade or so. In his opinion, the slowing down of the growth rate is a result of those two features. Our over-zealous loyalty to the WTO prescriptions and imitating the rich North led to the lower public investments. And we should never forget that agriculture is the mainstay of our economy. If the income of the farmers does

not increase, there is no growth in demand for manufactured goods and services. The speed of the whole process remains slow.

We must give up the TINA syndrome. We must take a bold stand that “there is alternative to the free market economy.” The citadels of capitalism for the last two centuries are crumbling under their own weight. Almost every analyst of the recessionary crisis in the USA says that the deregulation of finance capital in 1970s is the root cause of the malaise. A number of commentators say that it is the greed of the handful operatives of money market that is the cause of the calamity. As a way out, rigorous discipline is indispensable. In our country, financial institutions are well-regulated by the RBI. And many of the banks are owned by the Government. There is a demand from certain quarters for making rupee convertible even on the capital account so that the inflow of FDI will grow. It is not desirable to expect foreign capital to help accelerate rate of our development. The situation today is like this: rich countries are facing difficulties of increasing unemployment, heavy burden of sovereign debt, declining rate of repayment of the loans borrowed from the banks for building or purchasing houses, or defaults in redeeming credit card obligations. The share markets in those countries are facing steep downturn. Not much capital can be expected to flow from those countries to the developing ones.

Another misconception needs to be corrected. When the protagonists of Free Market and Globalization ask for more and more privatization, they mean “corporatization”. Otherwise what is the justification for allowing 100 % foreign capital in multi-brand Retail Trade in India. For centuries, the retail trade here is being carried on by private traders - small or big. They are private proprietary concerns. Whatever the plus and minus points of that system, are they not private? Then why the clamor for opening retail trade in big cities to the corporate firms like Wal Mart and Centucky? It is better to have decentralization of retail trade and not to disturb the employees engaged in it. If any initiative is to be taken, it may be done by promoting joint cooperative societies of the producers and consumers.

Returning to the theme of Pulapri Balkrishnan, we must embark on an ambitious program of public investment mainly in agricultural sector. And we can do it because the rate of household savings is almost stable at the level of 34-35%. Rate of saving of the Public Sector undertakings has also to be accelerated. Majority of them are earning profits. The case of petroleum concerns is special –because of perpetual increases in the price in the world market. Sooner than later, we will have to discourage consumption of fossilized fuel as a measure to minimize gravity of global warming and high proportion of deficit in our foreign trade. More than 30 % of our imports consist of oil. We cannot afford to bear heavy burden of servicing foreign debts. And perpetual traffic jams in all urban areas are taking a heavy toll of common peoples’ health and energy.

Building New Political Alliance

D. K. Giri

Two weeks ago I wrote that the UP results might break the mould in Indian politics, (11 March 2012, Janata). I have since received several comments from friends and comrades; James Chiriyankandath, a comrade and the Editor, Commonwealth and Comparative Politics said, “I am doubtful about the prospect of viable Third Front with parties involved being such ragbag and some led by notoriously impetuous and unreliable leaders. Also, the Indian experience has been that coalitions are only stable with a major party (i.e., BJP or INC) at its core”. A comrade from French Socialist Party wrote, “Regarding the Third Front, don’t you think that the issue would be leadership of such a diversified coalition of so-called regional parties, which party would run the show.” An Indian Comrade suggested dismissively that, “Third Front is very distant possibility; in fact, it may never come, as they will not agree on a leader, and they will fall out sooner than later.” Finally, a Union Minister, who was once a member of the Third Front, told me in an informal chat that “Congress party-led UPA is the Third Front now, so there is no room for another Front.” All these remarks certainly merit a discussion on the probability of a Third Front, in fact, a New Alliance of progressive political actors. Since I pointed to this emerging new scenario, this article is an attempt to suggest a format for the New Alliance, opposed both to NDA and to UPA.

My arguments not for recreating the Third Front but for a New Front

are principally two. First, the concept and the nomenclature have been maligned as quarrelsome, anarchic and amorphous group. Second, Third Front implies a third option while privileging the other two - Congress and the BJP as the First and Second Fronts. Moreover, the Third Front called (National Front, then its successor United Front) did not have an ideological connotation to its name, it was just meant to be a non-Congress and non-BJP Front. That is why some partners easily shuttled between UPA, and NDA and NF or UF.

What will be in fitness of political things today is to create a new alliance called Social Democratic Alliance. This Alliance will have strong and universal acceptable ideology, Social Democracy, and it will have constituents in a robust coalition framework, details of which can be commonly worked out and agreed upon.

The Social Democratic Alliance (SDA) as opposed to National Democratic Alliance, or United Progressive Alliance, will have greater appeal, as Social Democracy is an international ideology, after the decline of Communism and fall of Capitalism, it has become the most viable ideology, and Social Democracy is also written into our Constitution, so no one will grudge the ideological choice of the new alliance. The challenge however is to validate it through policies and actions. The next daunting question is which parties should constitute SDA. While addressing

this question, it is important to alleviate the genuine apprehensions expressed by comrades.

A Big Party to Lead!

Must the Alliance be led by a big party like BJP or Congress? In coalition politics, it can cut both ways, while a big party can stitch coalitions easier, as it requires other small parties for small support, and the leadership is secured for the largest party. On the other hand, the smaller parties can feel dominated. This is what is perhaps happening with TMC and the Congress party, since Mamata Banerjee is of Congress background, she is demanding to be heard and reckoned with. Again, NDA held together, not because of the big brother BJP, but a rather magnanimous and accommodative leader like Vajpayee, and secondly, the Convener of NDA was George Fernandes, the president of a smaller party, Samata Party. If we look at the coalition of South Asian Countries in SAARC, although somewhat different from party coalitions, India invites suspicions of being a bully, whereas in reality it may not be always the case. The argument that only a big party can hold an alliance is not sustainable. One stigma from the past that still haunts any discussion on a Third Front is that it was contentious and non-cohesive, and will split at the drop of a hat. When the Third Front was created in late 1970s and 80s, coalition politics was not an accepted norm. BJP formed the first coalition under Vajpayee and defeated Congress in 1999, and then only the Congress realized that it cannot win a general election without getting into a pre-poll alliance, and formed UPA in 2004. Since then, coalition politics has become an indispensable political approach; so even SDA will benefit

from experience and exigencies of coalition politics.

The Constituents

Samajwadi Party

With its massive victory in 2012 Assembly elections, Samajwadi Party eminently qualifies to be a part of SDA. The party was founded in 1992, two decades ago, by former members of the Socialist Party. Its founder president Mulayam Singh Yadav is a follower of Rammohan Lohia, who was the founding member of CSP in 1934, first a socialist caucus, then a full-fledged Socialist Party. The official ideology of the party is stated as, “the Samajwadi party believes in creating a socialist society, which works on the principle of equality, and the party has a democratic and secular approach.” No doubt, Samajwadi Party is socialist in its name and principles; but it has been criticized by Socialist thinkers as a casteist, Muslim communalist and criminalized party. To some extent, Samajwadi Party, like any other party, to survive in competitive electoral politics, has adopted some of the tactics favoring a particular caste group, aggressively courting Muslim voters and allowing people of criminal connections into the party. The new generation of its leadership portrayed by the current Chief Minister of UP, Akhilesh Yadav can eschew such tendencies in the party, and lend a modern outlook, reinforcing its socialist background and credentials.

Janata Dal (United)

Janata Dal (United), JD(U), is also led by former Socialist Party members. Its president, Sharad Yadav, and its Star leader, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar were part of the famous JP movement,

which was informed and inspired by Social Democracy. Again, for political exigency, mainly in Bihar, JD (U) made alliance with BJP. Its leader George Fernandez, used to say, “it was a historical necessity to fight Rashtriya Janata Dal, another offshoot of JP Movement, which was leading Bihar down the road to criminalization, corruption and pauperization. JD (U) can come out of the uneasy alliance with the rightist BJP and join SDA, if it finds a propitious political combination.

Trinamool Congress

Mamata Banerjee’s Trinamool Congress (TMC) has been both in NDA as well as UPA. As a matter of fact, TMC’s political alliance is determined by the positioning of Communists. When the Communists were part of UPA-I, TMC had no choice, other than joining NDA. It stayed there under the affectionate and accommodative leadership of Vajpayee. Mamata Banerjee was a Minister without any portfolio, which showed TMC was far from comfortable. As a breakaway group of Congress, TMC had no love lost for INC. As an ex-Congress woman, Mamata Banerjee is quicker than others to detect any manipulation and overbearing attitude of the Congress. She will thus be a formidable opponent to Congress party. TMC has won a historic mandate in West Bengal, while dislodging the Communists led by CPM, which according to Mamata Banerjee consisted of cadre, police and mafia. TMC is social democratic in its outlook as it professes “to uphold and work for the furtherance of principles of nationalism, socialism, secularism and democracy”. Of course, these could be the principles of any political party in India, but what is important is how they are adopted and implemented by the

मुंबई शहरातील एक अग्रगण्य सहकारी मुद्रणालयाची ५०व्या वर्षाकडे यशस्वी वाटचाल



लोकमित्र सहकारी मुद्रण प्रकाशन संस्था मर्यादित

ए-१८, श्रीराम उद्योग भवन, १३, जी.डी. आंबेडकर मार्ग, वडाळा, मुंबई - ४०० ०३१, दूरध्वनी : २४१४७०८२

श्री. अशोक पंढरीनाथ सरफरे
अध्यक्ष
श्री. ज. भा. जाधव
सचिव

अॅड. मधूकर साळूंखे
कार्याध्यक्ष
श्री. नरेंद्र भुर्के
सहसचिव

श्री. आनंद माईणकर
उपकार्याध्यक्ष
श्री. केशव उतेकर
खजिनदार

संचालक

श्री. सुहास नलावडे
श्री. वसंत एस. भोसले
रेवती पोंडकर

श्री. विजयकुमार शेलार
श्री. भास्कर सावंत

वैशिष्ट्य

- ◆ मल्टीकलर ऑफसेटची सर्व प्रकारची दर्जेदार छपाई
- ◆ दर्जेदार व सुबक पुस्तक बांधणी
- ◆ संगणकद्वारे अचूक अक्षर जुळवणी व डिझाईनिंग
- ◆ छापलेली स्टेशनरी अपेक्षित ठिकाणी पोहचविण्याची व्यवस्था
- ◆ टेलिफोनवरील संपर्काप्रमाणे प्रतिनिधी पाठविण्याची व्यवस्था
- ◆ आमच्या उत्तम आणि दर्जेदार सेवेचा अनुभव घ्या

आमच्या येथे करण्यात येणारी छपाईची कामे
वार्षिक अहवाल, दिनदर्शिका, मुखपत्रे, नियत
कालिके, पुस्तके, रोजनिशी माहिती पत्रके, जाहिरात
पत्र, पोस्टर, मेलर, फोल्डर, हेड आउट, कॅटलॉग, कार्यालयीन
कागदपत्रे, रजिस्टर, दिवाळी अंक

party. TMC is committed to the poor and to distributive justice. That is the essence of socialism. It is strategic to keep TMC in SDA, to keep the Communists out; more a bit later on why the Communists must be kept out.

Biju Janata Dal (BJD)

BJD like JD(U) and SP is of kindred political spirit. Like the JD(U), BJD too had alliance with BJP and was a part of NDA, out of so-called 'electoral political compulsion'. It has won three consecutive historic victories in Orissa. The leader of BJD, is the Chief Minister of Orissa, Naveen Patnaik who is known to be clean and incorruptible. As Orissa Congress was steeped in scams and scandals, Naveen's personality and image came as breath of fresh air and Oriyas have stuck to him for over 13 years now. BJD could strengthen SDA in Orissa and nationally.

Telugu Desam Party (TDP)

Chandra Babu Naidu of TDP has been a "king maker" in Delhi. He was the convener of the United Front which was formed by 13 political parties and had two national governments between 1996 and 1998. Naidu, who remained focused in Andhra, had a good record of running the UF. Given that Congress is in a sticky wicket in Andhra, Chandra Babu will bounce back and join the SDA. Being a regional party TDP may not seem to qualify ideologically to be a part of SDA. But if SDA has to factor identity politics, and reconcile identity and citizenship in Indian politics, TDP is a good partner to have in SDA. It is true that TDP has had alliance with BJP in 1999 and 2004, but so had others like BJD, JD(U), and even JD(S) in Karnataka.

Other Parties

Other parties that can be part of SDA are JD(S) in Karnataka, AIADMK in TN, and new socialist parties like Socialist Party(India) and Samajwadi Jan Parishad. Even though the new socialist parties may not have representations in Legislatures or Parliaments and have not much electoral strengths, they enhance the ideological profile and presentation of the Alliance. It is therefore in the interest of the SDA to count them in.

Keep the Communists Out

A few of my friends and comrades disagree with me when I maintain that the Communists thrive on chaos and confusion. Their strategy is to destabilize the 'Centre' or the 'Core' to advance their own party-political interest. BJP and Communists are kindred brothers in their party-political strategies. There is enough anecdotal evidence that needs to be brought out through rigorous research to prove that they wrecked the United Front from within with their strategy of 'destabilization'. In the past too, the Communists have betrayed their allies and have attempted to capture parties and alliances with their tactics of 'entryism'. I have quoted in my earlier writings, Minoo Masari who wrote in a tract named Communist Plot against the CSP, "Communists always betrayed their Allies and backstabbed them at every turn". The story of Communists and Social Democrats merit a fuller and longer discussion but one would argue in the context of proposed SDA that Communists are best kept out.

To sum up, cynics would argue that SDA is not in the realm of probability; these parties will have no agreement on the leadership issue

and so on. To them, one could remind what Otto Von Bismarck remarked on 11 August 1867 "politics is the art of possible", and we may add, 'an attempt at the preferable'. As I said in the beginning, the Alliance will run on a framework, not on so-called 'coalition dharma' while eliminating any room for ego, eccentricism and equations. If we look around, it is the former constituents of Janata Dal who are in ascendance now, they need to continue the good work, learn from the past, and go for the preferred destination - that is a truly social Democratic Government at the centre.

(Continued from Page 3)

Amidst gloomy news Pranabda received some news to cheer him up while he was getting ready to reply to the budget debate. According to tentative (we use the word advisedly since the data is not final) figures of the Planning Commission, the level of poverty in India has declined in the last five years both in urban and rural areas. It means that the number of poor people has gone down, but poverty remains where it always was. We have a long way to go to get rid of poverty. Which means that the battle for "Garibi Hatao" has yet to be joined in earnest.

– S.V.

Khandelwal & Sons
Lower Parel.

Phone: 93222 32077

Distributors of
Lijjat Papads and
Everest Masala

Available at Nearby
YMC counters at Apna Bazars.
and other big malls.

Has Arab Spring Changed Direction?

Nitish Chakravarty

Over the past 14 months several Arab countries have gone through dramatic changes, climaxing in the ouster of seemingly enduring dictators in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen. The rulers of some other countries – notably Syria – are trying hard to thwart the popular craving for change. The self-immolation of a 26-year old street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, the only bread winner in an eight-member family, was the trigger for the revolt in Tunisia. The young man set himself on fire on December 17, 2010, as a mark of protest against uncalled for harassment by corrupt officials, and died on January 4, 2011. The poor but educated vendor's sacrifice inspired Tunisian youth to take to the streets, forcing the country's strongman, Zine-al-Abidin Ben-Ali, from the office of president within ten days and to seek asylum abroad.

The regime change in Tunisia triggered a chain of upheavals in other Arab countries. The siege that students and other young people laid at Cairo's fabled Tahrir Square early last year shattered Egypt's three-decade long political equilibrium. From the very beginning of the uprising the police refused to use force against the demonstrators; even the army chose to ignore orders from higher-ups to forcibly disperse the peaceful crowds. In the event President Hosni Mubarak had to climb down from his high perch on February 11, 2011, within hours of declaring that he had no intention to abdicate.

Then came the turn of Libya's dictator Muammar Gaddafi. Libya lived through months of wanton tyranny following the outbreak of protests against Gaddafi in February 2011. Zain-ul-Abidin Ben-Ali

escaped the guillotine by the skin of his teeth. Mubarak was arrested and is being prosecuted. If Gaddafi had stepped down early enough like Ben-Ali or Mubarak, he might have escaped the grisly death he met with on August 23, 2011, while trying to flee. President Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen saved himself from a gory end by yielding place to Abd al-Rab Mansur al-Hadi as the country's new head of state on February 27, 2012. Syria is currently going through a blood bath demanding the ouster of President Bashar al-Assad. The common people are bearing the brunt; thousands have been brutally killed by mercenaries under the Syrian President's orders.

The contagion has spread far and wide, and unrest has gripped all Muslim countries from Morocco to Iraq, Gabon to Albania. Some other regimes are tottering. The potential for upheaval is not confined to the Arab countries of northern Africa. Saudi Arabia, the richest Arab land that happens to be a member of the Group of 20, also fits the profile. Notwithstanding the Saudi ruler's deep pockets, the kingdom has a high proportion of unemployed youth, and murmurs of discontent are clearly audible. What adds to Saudi Arabia's vulnerability is that it is ruled by an ailing king now in his eighties.

The revolts, described in sections of the international media as the Arab Gdansk - Poland's identity movement named after the city where it started in the late 1980s - signalled the triumph of young men and women eager to break out of a past hemmed in by dictators, and fashion a future that would change the political dynamics of the Arab world. In the early days of the uprising in Egypt, some of the

revellers celebrating in the streets of Cairo marched under a Tunisian flag. Pointing to the surviving autocracies in Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Yemen, one of their leaders had declared then: "We are setting a role model for the dictatorships around us. Democracy is coming." But even before the upheaval has run its full course, the movement for replacing authoritarian regimes with democratically elected people's representatives seems in danger of being hijacked by hardcore Islamist elements.

The Muslim Brotherhood, a revivalist movement founded by a schoolteacher in a Suez Canal town 84 years ago, has emerged as the most powerful political force in Egypt. Its ascent to the forefront of Arab politics is a pointer that the ideals of democracy and liberalism may be consigned to the waste bin. Even though the uprising was powered primarily by young people and liberal activists, the Brotherhood's vast following and the disciplined organisation it built during its decades as a banned outfit give it pre-eminence among civilian groups.

Elections for a new Parliament have given the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party, together with the Congress for the Republic and Ettakatol, a supposedly left oriented party, a majority. The Salafis, an alliance of ultra-conservative Islamists, have captured the second largest share of seats. Saad el-Katatni, a prominent Muslim Brotherhood leader, is destined to play a key role in Egypt's public life as the speaker of its parliament.

Despite loud protestations by Brotherhood leaders that they would

not turn Egypt back into an Islamist haven, how far or how fast they might push to make it more Islamic than it was under Mubarak is one of the biggest questions hovering over the entire Arab world. The Brotherhood has said repeatedly that it intends to form a coalition or unity government, in part to avoid unnerving Egyptian liberals or Westerners who fear an Islamist takeover.

Another question is whether the current manoeuvring between the Brotherhood and Egypt's military rulers will end in accommodation or in conflict. The military continues to call the shots since the fall of Mubarak, and there has been no let-up in attempts to crush demonstrations in Tahrir Square calling for the transfer of power to civil society representatives. Many people suspect the Brotherhood of pursuing a cozy accommodation with the military. There is a looming danger of the youthful leaders of the uprising being pushed to the background and the older generation, bound together by faith and alliances, having the greatest say in charting the future of Egypt and perhaps other Arab countries.

The political shifts of recent weeks have been accompanied by speculation over the views and roles of Tunisia's security forces. Sections of these forces orchestrated the crackdown on demonstrations while others appear to have influenced Zine al-Abidin Ben-Ali's decision to step down. Zine el-Abidin's autocratic government enjoyed the support of the United States and French governments, and the initial reaction of the governments of these countries to his ouster was muted.

It is difficult to calculate with any measure of accuracy how many people lost their lives in the bloodbath that occurred in Muammar Gaddafi's land. Those in positions of power in

Libya are in disarray and are far from being in control of the unfolding developments in this country of diverse ethnic communities, often at daggers drawn with each other.

The churning in the Arab countries has brought about a sea-change in the geo-political realities of the region. No one knows how one of the most critical chapters in the history of the modern Arab world will end, as the region pivots from

a movement against dictatorship towards a movement for something that is proving far more ambiguous. India has vast stakes in the emerging scenario in Arab lands but our Foreign Ministry seems to have decided that it is best to wait and watch. India made its first direct contact with Egypt only in March, more than a year after the uprising, when Foreign Minister S. M. Krishna found time to visit Cairo.

On reading Com. Qurban Ali's 'Seventy Five Years of Socialist Movement in India' in the continuous weekly issues of JANATA from October 8-November 18, 2009, I felt that such an important historical document should have been printed in book form for preservation and for the benefit of posterity.

I was then pretty old, suffering from prostate enlargement and other infirmities, generally common with advanced old age persons getting a substantially meager service pension as retired teacher and headmaster. I refused to accept political sufferer's pension and Tamra Patra for my sacrifice in fighting for the country's freedom, content with the meager service pension.

It so happened that on my hundredth birthday on 7th December 2011 a friend of mine running a printing press in Vellore, my birth place, called on me to congratulate me on my turning hundred and one. I took that opportunity and asked him if he would fulfill my desire to print the book for my sake by undertaking the full responsibility to print about a hundred books and after completing the job, send the books by lorry or by train to Janata Trust, Mumbai on my behalf. He accepted to oblige provided, given him sufficient time, as it would be the festival time in Tamil Nadu.

That is how this book has come out at long last.

**- M.S.V. Murthi,
Chennai 600 033**

15th February, 2012

The book containing

Qurban Ali's article, Presidential addresses of Narendra Deva and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Meerat and Faizpu Theses and Profiles of Socialist Party's Founder Members compiled by Qurban Ali is available

with Jahata Trust

Price Rs. 60/- (Postage extra)

Dipra Cosmetics Pvt. Ltd.

12A/3, Takshila, Mahakali Caves Road,
Andheri (E), Mumbai 400 093
Phone: 28327435

**Manufacturers of Bodyline talc powder
Hairline Shampoos
and
Floorline Liquid Soap,
Toilet cleaners. etc.**

**Available at
all YMC counters – Khadi Bhavan and Apna Bazar.**



APNA BAZAR CO-OP

MUMBAI KAMGAR MADHYAWARTI GRAHAK SAHAKARI SANSTHA MARYADIT

(Multi-State Consumer Co-operative Society)

Govindji Keni Road, Naigaon, Dadar (East), Mumbai-400 014.

MAIN CHARACTERISTIC

- 60 YEARS SERVICE IN CONSUMER SECTOR
- ONLY ONE MULTI-STATE CONSUMER CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY IN INDIA
- MORE THAN 40 RETAIL OUTLETS
- ANNUAL TURNOVER IS 100 CRORES
- 15 LACS LOYAL CUSTOMERS
- AWARD WINNER OF JAMNALAL BAJAJ UCHIT VYAVHAR [1989 & 2001]

➤ HEALTH SERVICES

- ★ DADA SARFARE AROGYA KENDRA - NAIGAON
- ★ H. N. PATIL AROGYA KENDRA - VASHI
- ★ FREE HEALTH CAMPS
- ★ MARKETING THE PRODUCTS OF SMALL PRODUCERS

APNA BAZAR FOR ALL

YOURS IN CO-OPERATION

ANIL GANGER SHREEPAD PHATAK

CHAIRMAN

VICE CHAIRMAN

DNYANDEV DALVI

SUHAS BANE

BHARATI SHIRSAT

SANTOSH SARFARE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

S.T. KAJALE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Silent Revolution: Understanding Anna Movement

Nishikant Mohapatra

The media hype is gone. The euphoria of the youths and the common man for a corruption free India with the possible enactment of Jan Lokpal Bill has subsided to a great extent. The politicians, analysts, opinion makers and the status quoits all have come together to denounce the “Anna Movement” as a small time phenomenon having little relevance to changing the present politico-economic set up. Some people have already written the obituary for the “Anna Movement” or the “India Against Corruption”. Even the well intended Anna supporters are puzzled. What is happening to the movement? Where are the groups who flaunted their support for Jan Lokpal through numerous processions, candle light marches and sit-ins? Why the media savvy local byte-givers are no more into the movement?

To the skeptics, the movement hasn't been effective since it failed to achieve Jan Lokpal Act as designed by the Anna Team. To the critics who are strongly attached to the Jal, Jamin, Jangle movements, India Against Corruption movement (IAC) is of fascination to the urban middle class youths and is destined to doom as it lacks a vision and solution to the problem of corruption in varied forms like access, distribution and entitlement. Others point out the divergence of opinions among Core Committee members and the lack of established ideological moorings as the factors militating against IAC emerging as a valuable and effective alternative to the localized, personality centric movements at various places throughout the country.

In this context, it is essential to study the IAC movement from a perspective to delineate its salient features so as to understand its impact, direction and promise for the hopeful millions of the public.

Salient Features

1. Gandian Values: With the rise of radicalism and ultra-left movements in India as well as in other countries, the relevance of Mahatma Gandhi and his tools of non-violence can't be understated. Anna Hazare as a practitioner of Gandhian values and tactics wisely moulded the IAC into a movement of non-violence, truth and mass mobilization. His emphasis upon individual character, Satyagraha and probity in personal life as the grounding stone for the larger battle of system change, no doubt re-emphasized the long-standing Indian ethos of unity of means and ends. In the process IAC generated a new longing among the youths of the country to debate, discuss and imbibe values of character, conviction and sacrifice. Numerous persons, young and old, came out of the narrow pursuit of career and money and joined the movement as foot-soldiers to fight against corruption. It is no mean achievement. In one stroke, the country's generation next realized its responsibility and longed for a purposive role in the affairs of the state.

2. Power to the Public: IAC movement is a great success as it clearly generated the awareness among the public that they have a role to play in a democracy not only through casting their votes after a particular duration of time but by

giving their opinion on important laws and decisions required for the governance. Whether the government accepts the demand for Jan Lokpal or not, it is clear that the public will be more vigilant and will try to have a say in everything that concerns the public interest. The movement definitely re-crafted the understanding of the relationship between the government and the governed i.e. from master-servant into servant-master relationship.

People realized that the political representatives as well as bureaucrats commonly known as the “public servants” have usurped the power of the public or the masters on whose tax the administration is run and subverted “the mandate to serve” as “the mandate to rule”. While Right To Information (RTI) to some extent brought this fraud in to the open, the lack of tools for accountability ensured that the public servants retained upper hand.

The Anna Movement brought to the centre stage forcefully the issues of “Sansad” versus “Jans Sansad”, “Centralization versus Decentralization” and public's right for consultation prior to legislation and aspects came under public scrutiny. The movement made it crystal clear that the people can no more be taken for a ride in the name of Parliamentary Supremacy negating the very basis of parliament i.e.; the Citizen Supremacy.

3. From Individual to Issues: All traditional movements are built up around charismatic leadership and very often their destiny depends upon the leader at the helm.. But

IAC movement has ensured that apart from the Core Committee there is no centre of power to decide the programs of the movement. While IAC Core Committee only facilitates decisions and programs at the central level, the participants at the local level are free to decide their activities and programs locally. Anybody can claim to be a supporter and organizer of IAC at local level provided she/he enjoys acceptability among the public. As a result, the movement saw thousands of initiatives from the common public at various locations and emergence of decentralized leadership. There were no appointments, but thousands rallied around the issue of fighting corruption and making the government accountable.

Those who live by media and exist in public life with the mercy of the media and are mostly after the loaves and fishes of office found it very difficult to survive in the movement. Their initial hopes of personal aggrandizement through the Anna Movement and political aspirations seemed to be unrealized as there were no post, committee and designation. Hence, the vested interests slowly but steadily got out of the movement and the trend seemed to indicate decline of popularity of the movement. But, in reality it is concretization and stabilization phase of the initial euphoria. Now, the real soldiers are ready and some dedicated units can be formed for proper direction, precise articulation and decisive public action.

4. Towards Direct Democracy: The vastness of the polity and the nation-state has compelled democracies to adopt representative form of governance. Here the citizens vote for elected representatives as members of Panchayat, Assembly or

Parliament and they run the country for a definite period of time. As a result, with the sliding of party system and entry of corrupt elements into politics, the people have no scope to choose right candidates and what follows is bad governance. The representatives usurp the power of the public and behave as if masters of the public. As a result, there is no connection between public interest and decisions taken by the representatives.

Anna Hazare is of the firm opinion that it is time for direct democracy i.e.; now people must have a say in the decision-making process and the modern communication technology has a role to play in it. For Anna, now direct democracy is possible and it can be made cost effective. So the Mahalla Sabha, Palli Sabha and Ward Sabha should be constituted as Jana Sansads; Assemblies and Parliament must formulate policies in line with the opinions expressed in the grass root forums.

5. Marathon Run: People are puzzled as they do not find frequent media coverage of Anna's movements. But IAC is well prepared for a marathon run. It is obvious that the temperamental and shifty elements will vanish from the great mobilization. But those who understand the stakes at hand i.e.; real fighters will stay to build the movement brick by brick. They won't mistake the programs as purposes and won't confuse the hedges as end of the road. So for the committed ones the Anna Movement marathon is on and morph at various places. It has not failed and it is not a mirage. It is practical and on course. What is needed is identifying oneself with the movement in its proper nuances and to contribute towards its growth with full vigour.

The weekly "Charcha Samuhas" or "Discussion Forums" are increasing day by day. People are getting involved in the affairs of the state and having a nuanced discussion in all matters relating to national interest. If it continues and the trend sets in that people will discuss anything that affects them, then it won't be easy for politicians to take the public for a ride under the belief that it has short memory.

When IAC went for political pitching in Hissar and in subsequent elections in five states, a section of intelligentsia depicted it as "politicization of the movement" deviating from its stated non-party-political nature. Some even criticized it as "crude anti-Congressism" and playing into the hands of "Sangh Parivar". For them, IAC will lose its objective and character if it steps into the political minefield.

But, those convinced about the sagacity of the path trodden by Anna are clear about the political role of IAC movement. It is not supporting or opposing any party in election, rather it is seeking accountability from the ruling party during the elections - the duty of the electorate in a vibrant democracy. Any party in power must explain its performance and role vis-à-vis public aspiration and demands while seeking votes during elections. Therefore, the Congress was opposed for its failure as a ruling party to table a strong and effective Lokpal Bill. Needless to mention, IAC would have opposed any other party; had it failed not, unlike Congress, to bring a strong and effective Lokpal Bill. Already Anna has given a call for 2014 General Elections - to prepare the cadre, sensitize the public, to debate the issues and demands for effective systematic changes.

A Builder of Modern India

Mastram Kapoor

Dr. Rammanohar Lohia was perhaps, last among the builders of modern India and yet his contribution to this event is substantially significant in view of the fact that his road to modernism passed through the Indian tradition and it was not a direct import of modernism from the Western Awakening. In European countries modern era started with French revolution when the symbol of feudalism, the king, was hanged by the people, ushering in a new era of freedom, equality and fraternity. This turn of history took place, more or less, simultaneously with industrial revolution which produced a new class out of the serfs of the feudal era. This new class, later known as bourgeoisie laid down new rules to run the society which was called modern in contrast to the old rules and traditions. With this started the modern age, with its modern art, modern literature and modern concept of state. The whole edifice of modern civilization, is therefore understood as based on values of French revolution and industrial revolution, which in turn is the product of the New Awakening of European Renaissance.

India's transition from feudal to modern age started about a hundred and fifty years ago with the first war of Independence in 1857 when the people for the first time in history rose against tyranny. This first effort of people's revolution, crushed brutally by imperialist force, produced a melancholy effect on the nation which led it to introspection. A New Awakening inspired by the golden age of Indian civilization gave birth to great social reform movements. The great men like Raja

Ram Mohan Roy, Devendra Nath Thakur, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Keshav Chandra Sen, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Swami Vivekanad and many others laid the foundation of modern India on the basis of Indian renaissance and contact with western thought. It was realized in retrospection that India has passed through the dark age of about one thousand years, during which we lost our wisdom, valour and respect, in short, everything that characterized the great civilization and we submerged into all kinds of social evils, such as rigid caste-system, dowry, child-marriage, gender and caste discrimination, burning of wife after husband's death (sati), prohibition of widow marriage etc. Hence, our renaissance started as a social reform movement against all these evils and later adopted the agenda of political emancipation. The orthodox elements in the movement, however, protested against the social reform agenda and stressed only the political agenda. This led to division of the national movement into liberal and radical streams. The liberal stream was led by leaders like M.G. Ranade, Feroz Shah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia etc. and radical stream by leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai and later by organizations like Hindu Mahasabha, Varnashram Swaraj Sangh and Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh.

Another stream modeling modern India, arose from direct impact of

the West. This stream was led by leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru who were mesmerized by the progress of the West and were trying to import it wholesale, with its industrial, social, educational, economic and political formats. Modern India is thus the melting pot of these three streams and is in the process of growing and evolving. In the political scene we can see these three streams in the on-going struggle for power among the Congress, the Bhartiya Janata Party and the fractured socialist movement. The Congress carries forward Nehru legacy of wholesale import from the West. Bhartiya Janata Party, represents the orthodox stream, which opposed social reforms and derived its inspiration from the past including its rotten traditions. The social reform stream is represented by socialist movement led by leaders like Acharya Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan and Dr. Rammanohar Lohia. This has since split into various social justice groups around castes and yet challenging the centuries old hegemony of the superior castes. This stream is strengthened by another stream led by Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar who geared his efforts towards upliftment of the Dalits and ultimate aim of destruction of caste. Although these two streams of the third variety have so far run parallel to each other, their inherent urge has forced them and will force them to work together, since their ultimate aim is the same. This makes the study of Dr. Lohia, together with Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar essential to understand the making of modern India.

Studying Dr. Lohia with Gandhi on one side and Dr. Ambedkar on

With Best
Compliments
From

DOSTI GROPU

the other is interesting. He defends Gandhi on Communal Award but criticizes his method of fast and his approach to caste system which Gandhi defended except during his last days. He called Dr. Ambedkar, 'a great man in Indian politics and apart from Gandhiji, as great as the greatest of caste Hindus' and yet he could not reconcile himself with Dr. Ambedkar's approach of negative bitterness instead of positive anger. He sincerely wanted to draw him to his fold, not only organizationally but also in full ideological sense. (1) He also tried to merge the two streams, although this goal remained unfulfilled due to sudden death of Dr. Ambedkar. In his last days, Dr. Ambedkar was very sick, very feeble and unable to resist the manipulations of the Congress which was trying to lure away his followers towards itself. It maybe mentioned here that the election committee of the new party- Republican Party of India - had declared that it did not desire any election alliance with any leftist party. This was clearly against the wishes of Dr. Ambedkar and on the persuasions of the Congress party, which used Dalits as their pocket votes till the Bahujan Samaj Party emerged. Concluding his letter to Madhu Limaye, Lohia said:

"I do not know the men who now run the Scheduled Castes Federation. But I wish that the Scheduled castes of India were persuaded to make a rational estimate of the last 40 years of Indian politics. I wish they continue to have the symbol of Dr. Ambedkar for homage and imitation and Dr. Ambedkar with his independence but without his bitterness, a Dr. Ambedkar who would act as to be a leader of all India and not Harijans only". (2)

It is tragic for modern India that Dr. Ambedkar's followers continued

worshipping Ambedkar with his bitterness and made it their creed to antagonise everyone by a slandering tirade against all others, making the joint front against the caste system impossible. It goes without saying that India's entry into modernity will


remain barred as long as the caste-system is not annihilated.

1) Lohia's letter to Madhu Limaye, July 1, 1957: Collected Works of Dr. Lohia, Vol II, Page no. 233-34.

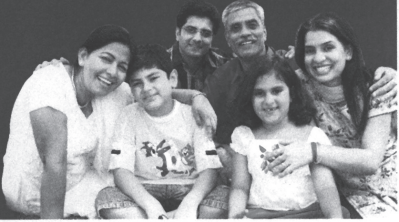
2) Same

www.abhyudayabank.co.in












ABHYUDAYA BANK



ABHYUDAYA
CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD.
(MULTI - STATE SCHEDULED BANK)



A bank that cares for all

 Network in Maharashtra, Gujarat & Karnataka	 Any where Banking facility	 Free ATM Facility	 Instant transfer of funds through RTGS and NEFT
 Speed clearing facility for outstation cheques	 SMS, Telebanking and Internet Banking	 MoneyGram & Xpress Money Services	 Foreign Exchange Services
 Corporate agent of LIC	 Demat Services	 Pancard Distribution Services	 Locker Facilities

Head Office:
K. K. Tower, Abhyudaya Bank Lane, Off G. D. Ambekar Marg, Parel Village, Mumbai - 12 Tel: 022-27892452 / 24140961-64
e-mail: mkt@abhyudayabank.net

Bank trusted by millions of Depositors, Shareholders & Customers.

Working Children

Nandana Reddy

When more than 71 percent or 70 million of our people are below the poverty line or living in less than Rs: 20 per day; when less than half of our school going child [age 6-14] population of 250 million ever go to school, where over 60 percent of children in India are anaemic and one in every five adolescent boys and one in every two girls in India is malnourished work becomes a means of immediate survival for these families and their children. These families do not have any surplus to sustain them, and an investment in education would be at the cost of their survival. They are unable to sacrifice the needs of the present for the intangible promises of the future.

From the perspective of working children, work was a means of survival. Recycling garbage gave instant employment to migrant children. If one was lucky to get a job in a technical or mechanical unit such as motor repair, tool making or garments, you learnt a trade/skill. For girls it was an escape from the drudgery of home chores, increased bargaining power at home and the possibility of postponing marriage. It was a backdoor entry into the formal sector; it provided a sense of dignity, self-worth, an identity and a sense of participation.

So as long as India treats poverty as an insurmountable problem and sweeps it under the carpet; as long as we focus on development of the middle class and the economic elite and give sops to the poor as long as we ignores the majority of our

people; child labour will persist. More than 680 Public Schools have closed in Karnataka and the Government of Andhra Pradesh is withdrawing aid to aided schools, the Right to Education Act has no meaning. All we have done is shifted the obligation of providing education to every child from the state to the private sector. When a super power like the United States still has children working in plantations, farms and in fast food joints, why do we pretend that we are close to solving the problem?

India has the largest child population in the world with 400 million children [40 percent] below the age of 18 years. Of these children 250 million are between the age 6 and 14 and less than half of them ever go to school which puts the 'out of school child population at around 125 million. Even if one assumes that 20 percent of these children are disabled or challenged, that leaves a 100 million children. This coupled with the below poverty line statistics [GOI: 37 percent²] would leave us to assume that these 100 million children are from BPL families and therefore working. This does not include many children from slightly better off families who chose to work to either support their education or in order to learn a trade. I feel we could securely put the child labour figure at 120 million.

Working children have waged many battles in numerous forums at home and around the world for their voices to be heard. Their struggle has always been a peaceful and now one

of patience as they continue their crusade in an environment that not only does not recognise them as workers, but has criminalised their work.

Laws are designed to work in specific environments. One cannot just take a law that has worked in one country and superimpose it on another, especially when the socio-political and economic environment is totally different.

Britain underwent an industrial revolution during which a large number of women and children worked. It later became prosperous, also due to the revenue from their colonies, and the more hazardous and harmful forms of child labour reduced; in Europe there were working children as recently as 50 years ago and again their prosperity, but more importantly egalitarian policies that reduced the gap between the rich and poor, resulted in the eradication of child labour or the reasons why children needed to work. However, even today, I challenge anyone to name a country where no child below the age of fourteen works.

The issue therefore are our child labour laws and more importantly policies and plans appropriate for our children. Have we listened to what they have to say? Do they enable children to take charge of their lives and transform it to one closer to their aspirations? Do they address the root causes of child labour?

— *Excerpts from interview to Enadu*

Are there Limits to Bahujan Politics?

K. S. Chalam

The recent election results of five states particularly in the largest state of India, Uttar Pradesh induced political pundits to make different conjectures. One important message according to some is that UP is becoming another Tamil Nadu, making the national parties redundant in state politics. This may be a farfetched hypothesis that needs serious empirical study following Indian approaches of understanding a native phenomenon. It is also pointed out that the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) did not make any impact on the results and the euphoria created around Mayawati was blown over after March 6th. This seems to be not based on facts. The vote share of BSP has remained almost constant ever since Kanshiram has experimented bahujan politics with Mulayam Singh Yadav in UP. The difference between the winning SP and the defeated BSP is around 3 per cent votes and BSP came second in 209 seats. Significantly, the BSP pockets of Agra and Bundelkhand regions seemed to have remained intact. Then why is the defeat?

Caste and religion have become so sensitive in recent times that a dispassionate attempt to analyse the issues at hand with academic interest are not received with appreciation. Yet, public discourse on issues of contemporary importance should persevere. It seems that the status quo of our society is maintained due to the failure of some groups to cut a few traditional mores. But, in a dynamic situation they feel frustrated and make the onlookers rueful. In this context we can see that some groups develop obsessions with entities that make them comfortable

as long as they are not challenged. For instance, like the orthodox Hindus' obsession with Vedas, the literate Dalits are alleged to be fetish with Ambedkar statutes. The issue of the statue is referred here in connection with the onslaught of Mayawati government in UP. That was the beginning of a protracted battle against her government by all parties that eventually made her to vacate the seat. No one is willing to recognize the greatest service she has done to Lucknow by beautifying the whole Gomati area and making it perhaps the only magnificent secular-public place developed during the post-independence period in the whole of India. Swamy Ankaleshwar Iyer in his column (TOI) called it the 'Lutyens of Lucknow' (it is more imposing than Rajpath). In fact, it has emerged as the pilgrimage centre for dalits. But, we are told that many groups among the dalits did not accept it and there are several green-eyed activists who started an undercurrent of hate campaign against her. May be the style of functioning of Mayawati might be responsible for that, but, are the dalit leaders not mature enough to endure it like they have been bearing for others for ages? Or is it the limitation of exclusionist politics that she was forced in and could not traverse?

Democracy according to one commentator is about numbers. In a country like India with caste, religion, region, language etc loyalties, garnering the magic figure somehow is now considered as successful politics. This was known to Dr. Ambedkar more than anyone else therefore he wanted

separate electorates for scheduled castes. He had to compromise with Gandhiji in 1932 (eighty years ago) to save his life and scheduled castes have been compelled to contest in reserved seats and solicit the votes of non-dalits who constitute nearly 70 percent. It means that the scheduled castes and tribes candidates contesting in reserved seats should perpetually depend upon others to get elected and should be loyal to the party that gives them the ticket. This is like our erstwhile Jajmani system of feudal period where you need to depend upon the one who commands resources and people. Realizing the constraints of the existing political framework, Kanshiram shifted his place of work to Uttara Pradesh (from Pune) in 1980s. Those who are familiar with the social statistics recognize that the phenomena of concentration of dalit pockets in the mainland Aryavarta of UP, Punjab, etc. do cross around 30 percent of the population in some districts. This is also true in Bengal. But, Kanshiram concentrated in UP and worked hard in the regions where the Muslims, Dalits and lower BCs comprise around 50-0 per cent. But, his experiments did not give the results and he finally designed the Sarvajan formula realizing that Brahmins constitute around 10 per cent of the population and are clever unlike in other areas. In other words, Kanshiram had gone ahead of the so-called identity politics to capture power. But, he could not witness the triumph of his politics in 2007 (one year after his death). This was very inopportune time for Myawati as she was dubbed by dalits as the one who mortgaged the self-respect of dalits to Brhmmins. The dalits have failed

to see the distinction between social movements and a political strategy in winning elections. It is alleged that Mayawati was forced to slowly estrange the symbol of upper castes Satish Chandra Mishra by 2012. Now BSP is restricted to UP and may be to a sub-region in future, if the present trend continues.

The competing politics in UP made the SP, onetime a Lohiaite party becoming worldly wise in making the affable young man Akhilesh Yadav as the new Chief Minister. The SP was originally like the BSP, but slowly graduating to become a bahujan party by bringing other castes also in to its fold. The upper castes in UP have done a moronic act of encouraging first the BSP against SP and now by supporting SP against BSP, they seem to have permanently lost the ground in UP politics for ever to be dictated by these forces. This attitude of ruling castes sustains

caste system in India. But, the future depends on how the BSP prepares its strategies. If Akhilesh Yadav succeeds like Mayawati in containing rowdy elements and bring rule of law, it is likely why the upper castes and Muslims look to BSP. The reading that SP won 58 out of 85 reserved seats to show that Mayawati has lost ground with dalits is not entirely correct. Dalits or any single caste on their own in any constituency (including reserved) do not win the elections without support from others. Therefore, the number indicates a general trend of some kind of a swing in favour of SP, may be due to the Muslim shift. However, BSP has pockets of dalit concentrations where it can get a minimum of 70 seats and a peak of 90 with its own vote bank. But, that does not bring victory. It has to play an inclusive politics. Further, Muslims would always feel comfortable with a non-dalit due to the caste stigma than with a dalit.

In fact, no political party including BSP, SP, DMK, RPI, etc that speak about social engineering has ever experimented in sharing power with the lower rungs who are minorities within the social groups and tried out constructive programmes to unite the so called bahujans, sarvajans and even the numerous dalit sub castes?

Dalit vote bank of BSP is alleged to be a divided house; disruptive behavior, leg pulling and finding solace with non-dalit leadership are considered as some of its shortcomings. This is the greatest limitation of bahujan politics as of now. Further, SP has shown that there is an alternative leadership in the party. But Mayawati has a problem of stewardship as dalits are disorderly and are too many to claim leadership. Unfortunately, Mayawati has no family to fall back upon as the future politics in India appear to be heading towards consanguinity rather than consensus politics!

Western Railway Employees' Union

Central Office: Grant Road Station Building (East), Mumbai-400007

P&T: 23083813 Rly- 43662, 43663 -Fax: 23003185, Rly. 43666

E-mail: wreuhq@rediffmail.com

The Western Railway Employees' Union ("WREU"), earlier known as Bombay Baroda & Central India Railway Employees' Union was established in 1920 at Parel, Mumbai. WREU is one of the oldest trade unions not only in Railway but also in the country, its registration number being 5. After enactment of the Trade Union Act, 1926, the WREU got itself registered on 30.10.1927.

WREU is a founder member of All India Railwaymen's Federation ("AIRF") and All India Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS), WREU, AIRF and HMS are free, independent and democratic trade unions.

WREU fought for upliftment of railwaymen and their family in particular and labour class in general for the last 87 years. WREU-AIRF is instrumental in creation of Permanent Negotiating Machinery ("PNM") for solving the grievances of railwaymen in 1951. Productivity Linked Bonus, large scale upgradations, etc. To the Railwaymen, these are some of the major achievements of WREU. WREU is the most popular union amongst the railwaymen on implementation of modified recommendations of the 6th CPC w.e.f. 1.1.2006

WREU was led by prominent trade union leader, late Miss. Maniben Kara and in memory of her, WREU established "Maniben Kara Foundation", a charitable trust fighting against the evils of the society.

Apart from trade union activities, WREU along with Maniben Kara Foundation is conducting various non-bargaining activities such as organizing Health Checkup Camps, Blood Donation Camps, Family Planning Camps, Anti-Dowry campaigns, HN-AIDS Awareness Campaigns, Trade Union Education Class, etc. for the benefits of the railwaymen and the general public.

Umraomal Purohit
President

J.R. Bhosale
General Secretary

Budget - silent taxes, rising prices, squeezed pockets- Who Gains?

Rakesh Manchanda

Medieval India folk tales remind us about the impact of the good governance process called tax collection. King's soldiers should be as silent as a bee collecting honey from the flower and should not disturb and hurt the public - was the ancient India Governance message. Today the silent impact of indirect taxes, high prices and microfinance loans together leads farmers and consumers towards suicides. The nation has to carry forward the choiceless baggage of lakhs of farmer suicides. It is a matter of common sense that due to unpredictable market it is difficult for a farmer, rather in comparison to a city entrepreneur, to pay back his loan without market support for his capacity. Recently, TV channels displayed a city labourer's hand chopped off as he was unable to pay a loan of Rs.300/- to the local lender. In ancient days, a loan seeker used to avail the opportunity of advance money called loan by producing more wealth in a period of time and then used to return the loan safely. Today government takes loan from the public savings with a business sense to utilise this money in making more money, more production, more jobs faster than the interest amount. It is a well accepted norm to talk of fiscal deficit as the gap between the income and future expenses of the nation. The fiscal deficit as pointed by few MPs in this year budget has been shown at about Rs. 5,22,000 crore while the tax revenues waved off or gifted as concession by the government stands around a whopping Rs.5,30,000 crore. It

seems that even the Government is forced to take loan without daring to say no to the Corporate concessions gifted as incentives. Figures show there could have been a loan-free surplus of Rs.800 crore if taxes were to be collected honestly.

Strangely ignoring the familiar Indian references to Kautilya's Arthashastra, the finance minister, in his budget speech, quoted from the Shakespeare's Hamlet. "I must be cruel only to be kind". This Shakespeare quote from the European culture is perhaps picked up by FM to motivate the majority in India, to prepare middle class and the poor for more sacrifices. Market survival is simple. One shinning - other suffering. It can never deliver the win-win for all. When someone is spending, someone else is gaining. In modern India with indirect 'hidden' taxes we find a new way to guide India's economy with tax collection. Since majority of our people have a hand-to-mouth income the possibility to use direct income tax to squeeze them does not arise. Indirect taxes carefully packed in each and every industrial and agricultural produce helps the law makers to hide behind the retailer and producer of goods and services. Direct tax collection is unpopular as four crore privileged tax payers in 120-crore largest democracy are expected to use concessions to generate more production and improve the GNP. Here the trick is that corporate rich are interested to give a false bubble growth by not investing in real production

but by pumping money in share bazaar ensuring jobless growth. Government continues to give concessions in direct taxes and justify favouring the rich at the cost of the poor. 69 billionaires have an asset value equivalent to one-third of our GDP, while out of the rest of the 121 crore Indians, over 80 crore struggle to survive on less than Rs.22 a day.

In the past tax system was simple. Direct taxes at the rate of around 6 percent in shape of crop was collected and deposited in the temple warehouses. Indirect taxes hidden in the cost of goods as seen today in the industrial/agricultural output was missing. If the tax payers in ancient times resisted they were expected to stop the King's horse, a part of revenue generation politics packed with religious label ritual called Ashvamedha Yagnya. If the rain gods were kind enough then the recovery of the tax was cent percent.

Majority fails to understand the difference of ten-times in the direct-indirect taxes direction and recovery. While direct tax collection is pegged at Rs 4,500 crore, indirect taxes would raise Rs 45,940 crores in the current year's budget. You need not be a student of economics to see that indirect taxes are a huge burden on the people, while the low direct tax rates are a relief for the rich. Common man calculates the risk in survival with his decreasing hard work value vis-a-vis his standard of living. In India when the price rises every month it hurts 99 percent as

the money in the pocket as earnings do not match and remain freezed. With no sale of goods in the market, no wage security, no job security and no social security the market recession stands teasing.

Terms like fiscal deficit and subsidy used by policy makers to calibrate and audit the budget do not make sense to majority people who are engaged day and night to earn a better standard of living. The helpless government is trying to hide the dirty poverty picture. It's false claims of decreasing poverty by lowering the Below Poverty Line limit is shameful. What the policy makers forget is that the financial crisis can only be saved by raising the standard of living. Better purchasing power of the people as market crisis `savers` is the only way out.

Policies in past were made as complimentary to environment and ecology. No feudal king in the past had ever dared to sell forest, ordinary well/stream water or river water including our holy Ganga. Silence of ancient tax collection is compared with the Sun silently converting the water to vapour but the rain clouds with thunder and rain supporting greenery must show that the money taken as tax is put back to the public welfare in the cycle controlled by the rich-poor divide with the participation of the people. Today the discussion is how and why to reduce the fertilizer and diesel subsidy. Much energy is invested to redefine the BPL India to save the Politicians from the shame. The government considers concessions for the rich as an incentive for growth while subsidies for the poor is seen as being negative for growth as it hardly reaches the needs and the system of distribution

has many leakages. The petroleum pricing policy is also skewed. The government calculates the prices of petroleum products on the basis of international prices of crude oil. But the fact is imported crude is refined in India and pricing should be based on domestic component inputs.

Why Pranabda chooses to include Hamlet reference in his Budget Presentation? A tempest in every home: Pranab plays it safe by putting more emphasis on Euro Crisis and more salary cuts and pensions in Europe. In subsequent media interviews the FM was quick to score by saying we are still better than Europe in Crisis. Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark in his first soliloquy, explains that he does not like his mother marrying the next King of Denmark so quickly within a month. It is unfortunate

that the helpless Finance Minister is committed like in marriage to protect the interests of few rich corporate and shift the blame to compulsory collaborations of the government with allies. Opposition and the Left was bitter in the Budget critique by demanding, "Why rob the poor to pay more to rich." 14 Lakh of industrial and agriculture workers and TUs which went on strike gave the FM their suggestions which were not mentioned in the Budget lay out. The Budget fails to see that fall in wages of workers both organised and unorganized engaged in production investments which means less purchasing power in the pockets of millions.

PM says the finance minister had to bite the bullet, but it seems he has bought the used empty bullets and is unable to learn from the Euro crisis

*With
Best
Compliments
of*

Bacchubhai Shah

Comments on The Opposition to GM Crops and Nuclear Power Plants

Dr Manmohan Singh,
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India,
7, Race Course Road,
New Delhi March 04, 2012

Dear Mr. Prime Minister

There has been wide coverage of your interview with the journal 'Science', on February 24, 2012 concerning the opposition to nuclear power plants and GM crops in India. You choose to resurrect the old bogeyman of a 'foreign-hand', this time pointing to external funding of NGOs to oppose Indian development, as if they are some sort of a 5th columnist operating to undermine the nation's interest. This we feel, is a highly inappropriate misrepresentation of facts. The misdemeanours of these NGOs, if any, may well be only minor infringements of the letter of a restrictive law that enables government to harass them as is now being undertaken. In reality, what we are all fighting against is indeed a foreign-hand operating at the behest of and from within your government, supported by Indian and foreign commercial entities, to corporatise Indian agriculture & farming practices and the energy sector, without in-depth and impartial analyses which prioritise the country's security and safety. If this is their sin, it is ours too. Your remarks, in essence, indict every signatory to this letter. Our individual and collective "unthinking state", an unlikely charge as that is, does not unduly perturb us; on the other hand, your charge that all those who voice dissent of your government's policy on GM crops and nuclear power do

not belong to the "thinking segment" of society is an indictment of a large section of our citizenry. It betrays an inappropriate distinction between "thinkers" and "non-thinkers" solely on the basis of agreement or disagreement with government policy. Surely, this cannot be. Informed dissent and a healthy response to it by our government through trusted dialogue are vital for a functioning democracy. We are not China. The absurdity of this position is therefore, self-evident and it absolutely requires us to make a measured and robust response through addressing the key issues surrounding GM crops and the nuclear power sector.

The prominently visible foreign hand of the US, in these two greatly important issues with ramifications for our country far into the future (and with regard to GM crops, irreversibly so), is squarely created and abetted by the UPA government. One indication of such collusion is the line-up of support your government has sought or received thus far, from ABLE (the Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises), the Indo-US Knowledge Initiative on Agriculture, the Indo-US CEOs Forum, the Indo-US Business Council, etc., all of which expose the distinct foreign influence deliberately brought into these critical policy areas. Along

with your investigations of the so-called anti-national misdeeds of the NGOs, why is your government not probing the influence peddled by these agencies and entities who are primarily furthering the interests of foreign governments and private multinational corporations? Or, is it that only those who support your policies are helping the nation, while those raising legitimate and scientifically-based dissent are all branded as traitors working against the national interest?

Furthermore, several important communications on key issues have been submitted to you in writing over the last two to three years, without even the courtesy of an acknowledgement from the PMO. We must assume from your remarks to the 'Science' journal that the evidence, which has hitherto been offered on the significant gaps in safety and liability surrounding both these technologies, by well informed and deeply concerned individuals and groups in the nation's interest, has not been seen by you, or else you would surely have taken cognisance of it.

In the attached Annexure, we have presented some key issues on both these technologies and their profound implications for our country. Based on this, we urge the UPA government to initiate a truly

inclusive process of deliberations with all stake-holders in civil society to help formulate a rational public policy with regard to both the nuclear power sector and GM crops.

With Regards,

Sincerely Yours,

1. Justice VR Krishna Iyer, former Judge, Supreme Court of India
2. Dr.A.Gopalakrishnan , Former Chairman , Atomic Energy Regulatory Board
3. E.A.S.Sarma, Former Union Power Secretary, GOI
4. Admiral Vishnu Bhagwat, former Chief of Naval Staff, Mumbai

5. Dr.Pushpa Mitra Bhargava, Former Vice-Chairman , National Knowledge Commission
6. Praful Bidwai, Writer, Columnist and Researcher
7. Mr. J.M. Lyngdoh, Former Chief Election Commissioner
8. Medha Patkar, Convenor, National Alliance of People's Movements
9. Admiral L.Ramdas, Former Chief of Naval Staff and Magsaysay awardee, Alibag
10. Lalita Ramdas, former Board Chair Greenpeace International, Bhaimala, Alibag
11. Dr Vandana Shiva, Director, Research Foundation for Science,

- Technology and Ecology
12. Admiral R.H. Tahiliani (Retd.), Former Chief of Naval Staff & former Chairman Transparency International
13. Prof. Romila Thapar, Professor Emeritus, Jawaharlal Nehru University
14. Aruna Roy, Social activist, MKSS
15. Dr.V.S.Vijayan, Chairman, Sálím Ali Foundation; former Chairman, Kerala State Biodiversity Board; Thrissur
16. Aruna Rodrigues, Lead Petitioner GMO PIL in the Supreme Court
17. Prashant Bhushan, Advocate, Supreme Court

ANNEXURE

REASONS WHY THERE IS OPPOSITION Genetically Engineered (GE) Crops

- Brief background: GE crops were invented by the US; given their raison d'être of profit for the Industry by patent laws in that country and their commercialisation promoted at the behest of the White House to "foster the biotech Industry" led by Monsanto, the international market leader holding 90% of crop patents. No GM crop is approved 'as safe' by US regulatory agencies in the US when they are put to market (GM cotton, Soy and Cotton, all of which are animal feeds). The Industry has held sway; there is little regulatory oversight.
- The KIA (Indo-US Knowledge Initiative in Agriculture) and the conflict of interest within government agencies and our public sector agri-institutions: India is singled out for the commercialisation of GM crops by the US and Monsanto, an objective that is actively facilitated by the

Indian regulators. This is well attested to in court documents. This conflict of interest found official expression in the KIA, which the UPA government sought fit to ink with the USA. The ICAR (the signatory partner for India), along with its affiliates, provided Monsanto with access to India's genetic resources (Monsanto was elected to its Board, a company that stands formally indicted for fraud, bribes, hounding farmers and some of the worst crimes against humanity). Though this agreement has since lapsed, formal public-private partnership agreements between the biotech Industry and our agri institutions fully supported by the Department of Biotechnology are accelerating this process. The official push for GM in Indian agriculture means that we are the only country extensively testing untested GM crops in open field trials in virtually all our food, ie our staples in grains,

our vegetables, oilseeds and fruit with great risk of contamination. In the matter of brinjal, Monsanto stands accused by the NBA (National Biodiversity Authority) of pirating an Indian brinjal gene.

- Bt brinjal and Monsanto's safety dossier: Bt brinjal was self-attested by Monsanto for safety, clearly an approach that invalidates it. Subsequent appraisals of that dossier by scientists which included globally eminent GM scientists concluded that the dossier was gravely deficient, with many safety issues not addressed at all and which remain unresolved, yet the apex regulator, the GEAC approved it for commercialisation. Shri Jairam Ramesh our erstwhile Minister, MoEF, has himself, very quickly following on from your statement, clarified the basis of the moratorium imposed by him in an open statement, citing the need for independent and long

term scientific studies

- The PMO and the UPA are briefed by Industry sources and deeply conflicted Regulators. On the 8 February 2010, two letters were addressed to the Prime Minister by first, 17 international and independent academic scientists and secondly, sent in a sign-on letter to the PM (by civil society spokesmen and prominent persons). Judging from the PM's comments to the 'Science' journal, we doubt whether he has indeed seen them, and yet, these letters are so important for their implications that we request the PM to kindly access them. They pertain to a letter written by Shri Prithviraj Chauhan in 2009, when he was MOS in the PMO to Dr A Ramadoss who had expressed his grave reservations on the safety of Bt brinjal. In his reply, Shri Prithviraj Chauhan said "the various issues raised in your letter have been examined carefully and by applying the best scientific evidence available today---". In short, he went on to fully support the safety testing regulations for GM crops and Bt brinjal in particular, pronouncing Bt brinjal comprehensively safe. However, the source of Shri Chauhan's letter was the biotech industry; sections of it were excerpted directly from promotional materials from the Industry, in particular ISAAA,

(the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications), an organisation that at best can be described as pseudo-scientific, funded primarily by Monsanto and other biotechnology multinational companies and whose admitted purpose is to promote and facilitate the commercial introduction of GM crops in the developing world. Shri Prithviraj Chauhan is not a scientist; but when six National Academies of Sciences similarly encourage the government to vacate the moratorium on GM crops without first addressing safety concerns, through a document that is purportedly scientific, that instead turns out to be similar cut & paste exercise from Industry sources, then it becomes clear that public policy and the basis for it on GM crops is in tatters and our situation is precarious indeed. The information flowing to the Prime Minister is quite simply erroneous. It is pertinent to add that Monsanto and our regulators cannot uphold their extravagant claims of the success of Bt cotton since no attempt has been made by an unconscionable regulator to undertake a post market monitoring of it over the last eight years; but based on official statistics of cotton production, there is reason to believe that current yield is falling to pre-

Bt cotton years and the reasons for this have been predicted from empirical evidence of the performance of Bt cotton in other countries, including resistance. We request the PM to kindly take note of this..

- Finally, the evidence against GM crops is overwhelming in that it will not feed the world because it has failed to deliver on yield, traits and sustainability; that evidence is in favour of modern organics and small farmers in the developing world, if only our government will heed and redirect investment into these agro-ecological alternatives. This evidence comes from the UN, the FAO, the World Watch Institute and from the World Bank and UN-led IAASTD (International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development). Twice peer-reviewed, this was a rigorous four-year process in which 400 scientists conducted the most comprehensive assessment of international agricultural technology and the path forward for agriculture for the next 50 years. India is a signatory to the IAASTD. The ability of agroecology to double food production within 10 years was recently re-affirmed by the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food.

Nuclear Power Plants

The Prime Minister similarly criticised NGOs for protesting against the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project and stalling development in India, placing the blame on NGOs receiving support from abroad. These are serious charges. We hope very much that there will be no misplaced zeal

through a witch hunt of NGOs as a result of your statement. On the other hand, there is genuine and increasing public concern over the potential dangers of nuclear technology, particularly because the Indian nuclear establishment is directed by the government to expand their nuclear power activity on the basis

of the import of untested reactors and in the absence of an independent & transparent nuclear safety regulator. No nuclear power plant is 100% safe and for the government to make such statements, as have been made only recently, stretch credulity and come across as glib assurances in the backdrop of especially the

Fukushima (2011) accident, which has been particularly devastating and is fresh in people's minds. The accidents at Three Mile Island (1979) & Chernobyl (1986) also involved human error and weak nuclear safety regulation. Japan is a technologically savvy country. Despite this, they have not been able to respond till date to the sheer scale of the Fukushima disaster to contain its impacts. In India, with our dense population, our lack of management skills, the unilateral decision-making at the highest political levels on the purchase of very complex and hitherto untested nuclear reactors and technology systems without involving the national safety evaluation process, refusal to constitute a totally independent and transparent nuclear safety regulatory system in the country, and our singularly inefficient disaster mitigation abilities, etc. could altogether land us in a major nuclear disaster soon, if these deficiencies are not immediately corrected. Cost estimates of the Fukushima accident are currently placed at more than US\$16 billion and it is still rising. It will take decades to clean up Fukushima and the significant stretch of surrounding areas of radioactive contamination; and the clean up may never be complete, as evident from the Chernobyl experience where the Russians are setting up a sarcophagus to shield the stricken reactors from humanity and the environment.

- **Conflict of Interest:** Despite an assurance given by the Prime Minister's office on April 26, 2011 that "Action taken on previous safety reviews will be put in the public domain", neither the DAE nor NPCIL have complied till date, thereby reinforcing public concern about the safety of nuclear plants. NPCIL seems to make a mockery

of the spirit of Article 19 of the Constitution that entitles every citizen, as a fundamental right, to be informed about the functioning of any public authority, to the extent that its acts of omission and commission affect individual life. AERB, which is required to oversee and regulate the activities of DAE and NPCIL, continues to be subordinate to DAE and the new regulatory authority bill introduced by DAE before Parliament, furthermore, does not ensure the independence of the regulator from the executive that controls it.

- **EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) and secrecy:** At many of our nuclear sites, including Kudankulam, no truthful and comprehensive EIAs have been made and associated public hearings conducted as stipulated by law. Where representatives of the local population have prepared scientific reports to the best of their ability, on their own, on pertinent safety deficiencies of a nuclear plant, the DAE has ignored those reports and not responded to the concerns expressed. A typical example is the recent PMANE Expert Group's Report dated Feb. 12, 2012, which the Kudankulam protest groups prepared and submitted to the DAE. This report highlights serious questions about the safety of the Kudankulam site based on geotechnical and oceanographic considerations, backed by independent and scientific data and publications from academic and research institutions. Through all this, the AERB which must come forth and defend the safety of these plants, has maintained a stony silence, whereas, in any civilized country, it is the regulator's duty to defend what they have approved as safe.

In India, it is because the AERB is a captive regulator who seeks permission of the DAE before they speak publicly on any issue.

- **Safety Issues:** Let us be clear that nuclear power, like most other power technologies, is not 100% safe and can never be. But, given that the downside risk of a nuclear accident can be immeasurable and the empirical evidence from the past three core meltdowns the world has witnessed reinforces such a possibility, how safe it can be will depend on the integrity of our regulators and our leaders who on the other hand are constantly manipulating the system, including the safety regulator. Our government has not yet realised that there is a strong positive correlation between the transparency of a safety regulator and the degree of eventual safety obtained. While the public is kept entirely in the dark on how safety is assured, the Prime Minister personally continues to endorse the relentless claims of the DAE and NPCIL that nuclear power technology is 100% safe. On that basis there is little reason for comfort. The enactment of the current civil liability law by the government betrays the PM's stance on safety claims. The government has gone out of its way to bow to the pressures and demands exerted by the US and western MNCs to ensure that the Civil Nuclear Liability Law shields reactor suppliers from accident liability in excess of the ridiculously low cap of Rs. 1500 crores (equivalent to US\$ 300 million). Evidently, foreign reactor suppliers themselves are not as confident as the PM seems to be of the safety of their own reactors and want the Indian tax payer to bear what could be an astronomical part of the liability

in case of a nuclear accident. The latest estimate of the Fukushima liability has touched US\$16 billion, compared to the cap of US\$300 million imposed by the civil nuclear liability law that the Indian government has enacted. Furthermore, yielding further to MNCs' pressures, the government has framed the rules under the liability law, exceeding the limits set by the law itself, imposing limitations on the definition of "consequential" costs and the time span within which the Indian operator can prefer accident claims against reactor suppliers. The easy terms that the Indian government has agreed to in this matter are truly a national betrayal; a constitutional aberration in letter and spirit.

As far as Kudankulam – Units 1 & 2 are concerned, the sketchy EIA report completed several years ago does not contain a comprehensive risk analysis, estimation of the probabilities of core-meltdown or major radioactive releases, the factoring in of potential human errors, or a proper site evaluation from the geotechnical & oceanography points of view. We believe not even a cursory examination of such issues was done when the site was finalised, or thereafter. Even if NPCIL claims that such an analysis has been carried out, they have not placed it in the public domain. When DAE & NPCIL choose to function in a shroud of secrecy with the implicit approval of the Prime Minister, it hardly seems fair or prudent on the part of the government to demand that the people who are going to be directly affected should refrain from raising their concerns. Why should this be? If the government has decided to investigate NGOs

who have allegedly received foreign funding, it is appropriate and even more necessary to investigate thoroughly, the circumstances under which unusual accommodation with western MNCs has been made by the same government.

- **Contracts, procedural flaws:** We have reason to believe that established procedures for awarding contracts to MNCs for the supply of reactors and fuel to Jaitapur, Kovvada and other "nuclear parks" are being flouted under a cloak of secrecy. We understand that the AERB, which is subordinate ultimately to the PMO, through the AEC, had no say in these purchase decisions and they were never asked to evaluate the safety of these reactors. These are serious matters which require to be scrutinised.
- **Sources of power for India and the German example:** The German government, heeding the lessons of Fukushima and a citizenry that demanded the required response, has already decided to totally exit nuclear power. With a current share of nuclear energy of 26%, Germany will move to a nuclear share of zero in ten years, substituting instead renewables like wind, PV and solar thermal. India's share of nuclear by contrast is currently 2.5%, and may rise to a maximum of around 7% or 64,000 MW by 2032. The contrast with Germany between our nature-endowed potential for renewables excluding big hydro, and of course nuclear, is even greater. A further insight into the energy equation demonstrates that we are one of the least efficient producers and users of electricity. On one dimension alone ie T&D losses, if we move to limit these to

10% in the next ten years (which is still higher than South Korea and the developed countries, where it is about 5 %), we will save over 150,000 MW of power, completely dwarfing the meagre 64,000 MW that nuclear will produce in aggregate. The key question is why has our government not produced a comprehensive White Paper on India's Energy Policy, including Nuclear Power? The blame for this rests entirely at the Prime Minister's doorstep, because he is not only the PM, but also the responsible Cabinet Minister for Atomic Energy. But, with the serious collusions taking place in this sector between the government, foreign & Indian corporate entities, a handful of bought-out senior nuclear scientists & bureaucrats, and others, the Prime Minister finds it convenient NOT to have a nuclear power policy on paper, but run this sector to suit everyone's whims and fancies. By acceding to importing reactors and fuel on such a large scale from France and other countries, has the government not jeopardised India's national, and especially energy, security? Which NGO will the PM point a finger at for this unpardonable lapse? Would the Prime Minister consider initiating a thorough investigation of the omissions and commissions of officials in the PMO, the Chairmen & Members of the Atomic Energy Commissions and the corporate business federations in India and their foreign collaborators and others, during the 2005-2011 period when feverish in-camera proceedings were taken up by the UPA governments on the Indo-US Nuclear Deal and its implementation?



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**